

From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe

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also by

LAWRENCE VAMBE

*An Ill-Fated People:
Rhodesia before and after Rhodes*

FROM RHODESIA TO ZIMBABWE

by
Lawrence Vambe

With a Foreword by
Judith Acton

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To all of my fellowmen who died in the cause of Freedom
and to Freedom itself, not of the few,
but of all men and women,
without distinction as to tribe, race and colour,
the Zimbabwe of tomorrow

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Foreword

It will be a great pity if you put this book down without at least reading the first chapter. Once you have done that you will probably be compelled to read the volume right through to its bitter, bitter end. This is because you have in your hands a work which, in many ways, is a work of art.

It is by a writer who happens to be an African born twenty-seven years after the formal annexation by white foreigners of that part of Africa known today as Rhodesia. The writer is now an exile from the land of his birth and he looks back on that land and his people with love and great longing. But had Lawrence Vambe been born anywhere else, and had his circumstances always been different, he would, I am sure, still have been a writer. His prose, while focused here on a certain area at a certain time, reveals a wide comprehension of and compassion for what may simply be termed as the human condition. His gay, delightful, outrageous and constantly outraged grandmother may, if you were lucky, have been your grandmother. His friends, his relatives, his oppressors (in many spheres and in many different senses) may have been your friends, your relatives and your oppressors from a beloved priest, a mesmerizing uncle, to a bullying, bashing prefect or worse. You may not think at this moment that you are particularly interested in Rhodesia, or in the evolution of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. You may not feel yourself concerned with any aspect of African history. That doesn't matter. The value of this book lies not only in what it says, but in the beauty of its form and in the emotional effect it has and that, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is the definition of literature.

Having recognized the universality of this work, it must also be said that it does of course have a special appeal for people who, like me, are natives of 'Rhodesia'. In the fullness of time it will be seen that 'Rhodesia', founded less than a hundred years ago, was only ever a short-lived colony but I must have

been about ten before I recognized with a shock that the country I passionately loved had not, in spirit if not in word, been an integral part of the very first verse of the very first chapter of Genesis. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth and a special part of the earth was called Rhodesia.' No. That hadn't happened. Our country had been named after a mere man, a man called Cecil, a man whose grave still looks fresh and raw and unnatural, cut into the ancient, quiet grey granite of the Matopos hills outside Bulawayo. Madzidza, Lawrence Vambe's grandmother, and her ancestors knew their part of our country before anyone had ever thought of Cecil John Rhodes. They were tilling the soil and waiting for the rains and harvesting their crops long before Cecil John ever left Bishops Stortford; long before he sailed to Cape Town, turned his eyes north and coveted the beautiful land; long before his bands of mercenaries became 'The Pioneer Column', so revered in the history books white (and black) children are given to digest in their Rhodesian schools.

When Lawrence Vambe was born in the beautiful Chishawasha area near the capital city of Salisbury, his family no doubt rejoiced and prayed that he would have a distinguished and happy life. Perhaps, though, they already knew that the life of any child born to the recently conquered African peoples of Rhodesia would be ordered by the conquerors and that while the Africans remained the conquered, few would be allowed distinction in any field; fewer would be permitted the peace of spirit and security of body that most of us require as a foundation to happiness. 'We were children who would take 2,000 years to grow up.' Nonetheless, and this is an instance of why I believe Lawrence Vambe would always have been an ardent, often compassionate but sometimes ruthless reporter of human lives wherever he had been born, he started at an early age attempting to see into the lives of these exclusive, alienating foreigners who now ruled the land, and he succeeded. 'Behind their apparently stolid character, there is a kind of mocking superiority in every black man, woman and child, which taunts the subconscious mind of the European and says to him: "Do your worst, but whatever it is, we shall survive."'

The book also tells of recent heroes such as Leopold Takawira who died in Salisbury Prison as a result of cruel incompetence on the part of prison authorities who permitted themselves to

remain ignorant of Takawira's deadly diabetes until it was too late to do anything but conduct a post-mortem. We learn to understand people like Charles Mzingeli, a long-time freedom-fighter who slowly but inexorably was driven into a lonely, hurtful, frustrated world of his own not only by the white authorities who fought his attempts to organize the workers, but also because of betrayal by a priest who ordered that Mzingeli put the affairs of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union into the hands of the Catholic Church and excommunicated Mzingeli from that Church when he refused. We are also given the background of some of the present leaders of the movement towards Zimbabwe.

There will be statements or suggestions in this book with which everyone, from different viewpoints, may argue. So much the better. I too have an argument which Mr Vambe has invited me to put here. It concerns an allegation that my father, Garfield Todd, used troops violently to break up a strike of African miners at Wankie on an occasion when he was Prime Minister of Rhodesia. I need say nothing more here than that I have researched the matter thoroughly, that the accusation is untrue, and that I am refuting it here for the simple reason that my father is entering his fourth year of detention and enforced silence in Rhodesia and cannot, therefore, answer for himself.

The last time I saw Joshua Nkomo, about eleven years ago, he said to me that there was no time to spare on agonizing about or justifying the past, and that all the energies we have should be harnessed for coping with immediate problems and building for a better tomorrow. I agreed. But, on reflection, I now believe that all tomorrows are rooted in our yesterdays, and that in order to cope with the present it is necessary to understand the past. In this context there is, running through this work, a barely discernible but very important and extremely troubling thread of thought which concerns the stability of any new society in Zimbabwe.

It is this.

If the population of a country is treated with contempt by its rulers; if, despite this, an individual tries to participate within the system and finds that, after all, he has done nothing but embark on 'a sterile occupation in the service of a people who barely recognize his existence'; if generations of people have been born under the rule of a régime which has perpetuated

racism and tribalism, broken the laws of the land, corrupted its judiciary, its parliament, its civil service, its press and radio and has brought our country into its present state of civil war, then what of the future? If the tragedy of Rhodesia is ever to be healed; if the people of that country are ever again to respect such concepts as justice, constitutional government, law and order in the real sense of those words, may we not need our own version of the Nuremberg trials, supervised by international judges, in which the policies and actions of the men who today continue to torture our country are exposed? Will we not need a cleansing of our courts, our parliament, our civil service, our armed forces so that the present spirit of opposition to these very institutions can first be defused, then enthused into a more positive spirit, so that the new state of Zimbabwe be given as tranquil and positive a start as possible?

Mercy and abundant forgiveness, yes. But, for the future health of our country, we also require justice.

March, 1975

Judith Acton

The death of our Paramount Chief Mashonganyika in the mid 1920s shattered life in Mashonganyika village. Only a few months after his burial ceremony, the inhabitants of this once thriving community in the beautiful area of Zimbabwe, Chishawasha Mission, left to settle elsewhere. This was often the practice after the passing of a great ruler, and Mashonganyika had been an outstanding administrator of tribal justice, a man who had loved his people, the VaShawasha, and guided and protected them ably through the difficult period of adjustment following their humiliating subjugation by the Europeans. His death marked the end of an era.

The disintegration of the village was not brought about by the death of the chief alone, however. Living under missionary control at Chishawasha, the tribe was now subject to pressures from the white religious Fathers, which had the cumulative effect of rendering them less and less able to decide upon anything for themselves, even the simplest details of everyday life. Not surprisingly therefore, many of the VaShawasha longed for a freer environment far away where they could follow their own religious customs. Even while the Paramount Chief was alive, the question of parting company with the missionaries had been raised, but Mashonganyika, who alone could make this decision, had feared the consequences. A cautious man, he had recognized that his people were the captives of a church whose power and influence had been growing stronger year by year since the 1896 Rebellion. He saw that the time when the Africans in Zimbabwe could make such decisions on their own account had been swept away with the conquest. He realized that he could not try to find a new settlement for his people outside Chishawasha without the Native Commissioner and the Church raising all sorts of objections. After all, he had been appointed chief on the strict understanding that he would co-operate with white authorities, and this implied that he

agreed not to hinder the efforts of the missionaries to tame and educate his people. If he had left Chishawasha, all his tribe would have gone with him, and the Mission would have become a white elephant. Such an act, he reasoned, would undoubtedly have been considered by both the Government and the Church as defiance to European rule. He remembered the ugly details of the 1896 Rebellion, and he knew that he had to avoid open confrontation with all Europeans, whether missionaries or government officials. As long as he, the head and heart of the tribe, was alive, it was unthinkable that anyone loyal to him, however disenchanting he might be with life under the Jesuit masters, should leave the area voluntarily. But once the Chief had died, his people felt free to act as they pleased.

However, not all the VaShawasha were convinced by this dream of a new Utopia elsewhere. When the actual time for departure came, a number of them elected not to leave their beautiful traditional area, which was associated with so much of their history. All my immediate family chose to remain in the Chishawasha area.

The moment of parting, I remember well, was so emotional that some people wept openly. These men and women seemed to realize that this moment marked the end of VaShawasha tribal life as they had known it years before under freer and happier circumstances. It was a desperate occasion. No longer protected and inspired by the physical presence of their Chief, no longer able to defend the old ways of tribal life under an alien religious authority, no longer a people with a single identity, they accepted that the alien forces that had overtaken them had finally triumphed.

Even I, at the age of ten, somehow sensed that the VaShawasha were now losing their tribal identity. The upheaval revealed that the tribe was now irrevocably divided. Those who chose to leave the area entirely were in effect trying to escape white civilization and its double noose of religious and economic enslavement. But those who stayed were beginning to understand that now there was nowhere in the whole country where Africans could live without interference from the hydra of white political, economic and administrative control, and so decided to swim with, rather than against the tide.

As for myself, I was less upset by this drama in the life of the tribe than I had been by the death of Chief Mashonganyika. As one of his many grandsons, and living, as I had done, very near him, I had seen him frequently. I had loved him deeply and in my youthful mind, I had somehow expected that a man of such standing would live for ever. The picture of him still lingers clearly in my mind.

Though spare of body and a man of extreme humility, he had had a remarkable presence. He exuded a kind of all-pervading love and a direct personal concern for each one of his people, and they in turn had repaid him with a reverence and an obedience that could only have sprung from their conviction that he was the supreme symbol of their tribal existence. I heard no malice, nor gossip against him. Had he been an old tyrant or a stooge of the Native Commissioner at Goromonzi, my maternal grandmother Madzidza's ever-ready tongue would have seen to it that such vital information was not concealed from anyone.*

Although he had ruled at the pleasure of the white Government, and with extremely limited powers, Paramount Chief Mashonganyika had tried to preserve as much of the old Shona court traditions as was possible. For instance, if weather permitted, he had always held his tribal meetings in the *Dare* in the open air. All the important men of the tribe were invited and there they tried tribal cases and discussed and took decisions on all vital tribal and national affairs. There was always a bright fire burning in the middle of this stone-walled *Dare*. And more often than not, a pot of beer was provided for the Chief and his Councillors to lighten their imaginations and stimulate their tongues.

The one thing I remember more clearly than anything else about these court sessions was the meticulously correct behaviour of those taking part. Each man spent a few moments seated in silence before he greeted the Chief and those who had already arrived. He clapped his hands loudly and then wished good health to those he was addressing. The rest of the men responded by clapping their hands as well. More often than not, these people did not use each other's names, but their *mitupo* (the singular form is *mutupo*), that is to say their totems. To greet people while you were standing, and to dive straight into a

* See *An Ill-Fated People* by Lawrence Vambe, Chapters 1-3.

conversation was considered by this generation to be the height of bad manners.

Another feature of these proceedings was the slow, deliberate nature of all the discussions. Nothing was done in a hurry. Certainly no one had the right to interrupt and make a point while another person was speaking. On such occasions these people showed how remarkable their memories were. Like trained orators, they recounted the sequence of events and put their point of view without hesitation, as if they were reading their facts from a book. They never stopped to search for words and the only time they diverged from the subject was when, as a mark of respect, they mentioned the totem of the Chief or of the person for whose benefit they were speaking. They modulated their voices from time to time, stressing certain words and phrases, so that the effect of their delivery was musical, like the declaiming of poetry. If a speaker hesitated frequently (*kundandama*, as it was called), grave doubts were cast on his integrity. Only liars dithered and struggled with words, so said tribal lore, for only liars needed to find ways to cover their true intentions.

All this fascinating life and much else besides came to an end with the death of the Chief. The tribe was never going to be the same again.

Like a great many other people of their age and outlook, my grandparents Mizha and Madzidza, also wished to move away from Chishawasha. Madzidza particularly argued that life outside Chishawasha would be much better. But the young were not prepared to listen and she and my grandfather were forced to abide by the majority in the family who opted for *chirungu*—‘the European way of life’—in Chishawasha. There is no doubt that had my grandparents been younger, they would have sacrificed family ties and gone off with the other older people to a Native Reserve where they believed that the polluting influence of education, missionary interference and the bewildering manners and ideas emanating from Salisbury were not so strong.

When finally we moved out of Mashonganyika village, it was inevitable that we should join with other Christians in Chishawasha, who were grouped into villages with outlandish names

like 'Rosario', 'Montserrat', 'Manressa' and 'Loyola'. The village of 'Loyola' happened to be the nearest, and so we came under the Christian jurisdiction of its Church-appointed Chief. Its African name was Gopera, and we preferred to use that. Our new home was only about a mile from the old Mashonganyika village. As Mizha had been a senior headman under Mashonganyika, a number of others followed him and built their homes around him. So, in a small way, they recreated something of the old tribal structure that we had known before. We must have been about thirty households altogether, with their typically extended African families, and in due course, we became a lively progressive community, if smaller and somewhat less colourful than we had been in the old village.

This new site was more beautiful than Mashonganyika. Situated on higher ground, we had a better view than we had had in the old place. And we made use of one unique feature of the place, a fairly sizeable hill, surrounded by trees and crowned by a flat rock formation that became the communal place where women could spread their grain and home-ground maize meal in the sun. The west side of this rock swept steeply downwards and we children used to play there. To the east, near the road to the Arcturus mines, was another high hill which had in the past been the site of the village of the former Chief Nehambakamba. He had been a renowned nobleman among the VaShawasha people and some surviving members of his family formed a part of our new community. They included one of his sons, Cyril Madunanga Shoniwa. At about this time, Cyril had just joined the Native Affairs Department. He was then the hope and pride of the VaShawasha, who were determined to be recognized in the new society they saw being shaped and controlled about them by the white settlers. He seemed so well set up and so self-assured that we felt he was the equal of anyone in the land, but, being an African, he was never to rise above the rank of head clerk in his department.

In this new environment, I saw more clearly what the late Chief had stood for in the life of the tribe. Whereas in Mashonganyika village old tribal ways had been important, now they were less so, except of course for a few people like my grandparents. The majority now leaned towards the European way of life, thought and social behaviour. It was as if the death of the Chief had freed them from their tribal vows. There were

no more rain-making or spirit dances, nor any of the rousing drum-beating song assemblies that often made tribal life so distinctive. My people were now open-minded towards tribal taboos, which previously they had been afraid to question. Suddenly they seemed to be rejecting *ChiSwina* (Shona) culture wherever it was in conflict with their new beliefs. With the death of the Chief, they seemed to seize the chance to escape from their old existence and were trying to make a giant leap into this new dynamic system brought by the Europeans.

We had hardly been a couple of years in our new home when grandfather Mizha was taken ill. At first it seemed it was little more than a cold. But Mizha was a Stoic, who accepted physical and mental suffering as some sort of a purification and kept silent. At first he did what he had always done, namely act as his own doctor. He was knowledgeable about curative herbs and he used to bring a whole variety of roots and leaves back from the bush, which he pounded, mixed and concocted into potions. But this time, he grew steadily worse. Madzidza turned to African medicine-men. One of these appeared soon enough, complete with his usual paraphernalia, but although he did what he could, grandfather's condition kept deteriorating.

Then, one day at sunset, as he sat looking west, he suddenly announced that he had seen a group of men dressed in black approaching his house. There were no such men about, we knew, and now we realized that Mizha was leaving us for ever. For it was a common belief that if a sick person saw images of men dressed in black, he or she would not recover.

With the certainty of his impending death, Madzidza and Mizha's two sons, Jakobo and Marimo, made a decision which I thought was foolish and inhuman. It was that my grandfather should be carried to Chikombo, the wife he had inherited from his deceased elder brother, who lived about five miles away, close to the Chishawasha Mission. The idea was that Mizha should die in the home and care of Chikombo and her family of three sons and several grandchildren, so that everyone would be satisfied that before his death they had been close to him. Otherwise his spirit would leave this world in a state of sadness—and that would not do, as those who leave with a sense of grudge are liable to cause trouble to the living.

Thus, with little ceremony, that day just before sunset, Marimo inspanned two oxen, which pulled a sled on which

Mizha was wrapped in blankets and carried to Chikombo's home. A Shona sled was one of the most uncomfortable modes of travelling imaginable: it had no wheels, and just bumped along on its wooden framework, shaking every bone and muscle of the passenger on the rough hard ground. Yet no one hesitated in deciding that this very sick man should be carried several miles on this primitive contraption. Just as I had suspected, Marimo and his pair of oxen had not gone more than about half a mile when his father died and he had to return the body immediately. But because Mizha's death had been accepted as an absolute certainty, it did not occur to anyone that they had hastened it.

In spite of the move, and the loss of many tribal customs, certain traditional responsibilities still devolved on the families of Chishawasha at this time. The assumption of the role previously taken by the deceased head of a family, for instance, was one of the most binding customs. Thus, after the death of Mizha, his son Jakobo became the head of our family, and every decision in essential family matters now rested with him. He was to look after the general welfare of each member of our circle and ensure that we did not disintegrate or misbehave; it was his job to reprimand any of us who stained the family's good name. At this time, it mattered a great deal to most of us to preserve a respectable family stability.

If Jakobo had been a brother, cousin or nephew of Mizha, then he would have been bound by tribal law to inherit Madzidza as a wife and to go through an actual marriage with her, regardless of their age difference. This was a procedure intended to reassure the tribe that the widow had someone to care and fend for her. In this way a man could be forced to fulfil his social obligations, and chastised, should he fail in them.

This practice conflicted with the teaching of the Church, which was unqualified in its objection to multiple wives. But the fact was that while European civilization and education had brought emancipation to the African woman, it had left her in a highly insecure position in what was then still very much a masculine world. Outside domestic service, she had nothing to offer Europeans in Southern Rhodesia. But the white society and the majority of Africans saw the black woman, if she strayed outside the social structure of her tribe, as fit only for the role of a prostitute. The VaShawasha, who despised the woman of easy virtue, recognized this danger well enough, and kept the custom of wife-inheritance going for the benefit of those women who had no obvious prospects of remarriage.

In Mashonganyika village, this ceremony had been per-

formed several times in my presence. As in most Shona ceremonies, the custom took the form of a feast, where consecrated beer and meat were in ample supply for the large numbers of people who gathered as witnesses. Its preparation took many days and the actual marriage rites lasted at least half a day—usually a Sunday afternoon.

On these occasions, many of the male relatives of the couple made speeches which were long, full of rhetoric and colourful phraseology, and often produced fascinating evocations of the tribe's past. But they could also be monotonous, for most speakers repeatedly emphasized those qualities essential to a happy married life. It was another of those occasions when my people, as a duty and an entertainment, gave themselves the freedom and immunity to speak frankly about anyone they pleased.* Anyone could eulogize or abuse the bride or the bridegroom or both, saying openly what they knew of the personal characters of the couple who were receiving the sanction of the tribe to live together.

The silent and defenceless victims were put in the dock of the tribal *Dare* and could be accused of being naggers, liars, misers or lechers. It might be laziness or insobriety—no vice was left out. It was a solemn occasion and no one attempted to introduce a touch of humour into their pontifical speeches. The reason for this public hearing was to bring it home to the couple that they should embark on this most difficult of human relationships with a reformed spirit. They were reminded of the problems of married life, of the temptations which threatened marital stability and of the binding nature of their union, whatever its burdens, particularly as old age and responsibility took their toll, and they were urged not to forget that since the white man had taken control of our land, moral values had deteriorated to allow licentiousness. The Western idea that people getting married should be made to feel happy and beyond reproach was far from the minds of the speakers. Well-wishers they certainly were, but in a very different sense from those of white societies. The Africans reasoned that this was the moment of truth, for it was in the truth about themselves that the couple would discover real happiness. They did not appreciate the romantic view of Europeans that a man and woman should be

* Compare the Mashave dances, *An Ill-fated People* by Lawrence Vambe (page 184).

left to discover each other after they had taken their vows. They should be warned so that once married, neither of them should have cause to express shock or surprise about the other.

At the end of this indulgence, usually towards sunset, beer was poured on the heads of the bride and bridegroom and they were considered to have been properly married. The proceedings were so heavy with ritual that it was clear that the couple would have to be very courageous to come back and ask the tribe to absolve them of their vows.

As a wife of Mizha, grandmother had plainly been autocratic. If she had had to remarry in this traditional way, there is no doubt that those entitled to speak on the occasion would have treated her unwifely behaviour as excellent material for public recitation. But she escaped such a fate. I doubt that she would have wished to have another husband—I certainly detected nothing to suggest that she was anxious to be rescued from her widowhood. She assumed an attitude of self-sufficiency, showing that she needed no man's protection or intimate company.

With people like Jakobo and Madzidza who brought a sense of fun and purpose to our lives, things soon returned to their daily rhythm after the deaths of Chief Mashonganyika and Mizha; in fact our existence became increasingly active. Most of the men had jobs in Salisbury, developed a sense of ambition and worked hard to add to their material possessions. A rising standard of living became the most important consideration, and they clamoured for higher wages, better, European-style houses, and all the new status symbols. Disregarding the Mission sermons, which reviled material wealth as a barrier to the Kingdom of God, these people were spurred on to furious endeavour, if they thought that they were being left behind by their neighbours in the race for earthly affluence and prestige. We were behaving like any group of white settlers living in the suburbs of Salisbury or Bulawayo, whose lives were mainly governed by the size of their bank accounts, houses, farms or cars.

It hardly seemed credible that less than thirty years before, my people completely spurned European materialism. It hardly seemed possible that the tribe had once absolutely refused to work for money and had had to be coerced by white people with the sjambok. Then, they had been condemned as an utterly

backward and indolent people who would take centuries to understand the most elementary concepts of European civilization. Now, after only a few decades of white teaching, they were behaving in most things like their conquerors. At least the majority of them accepted the idea of employment, together with its unrelenting disciplinary code which demanded regular hours, obedience and responsibility to those who hired them in return for wages.

At this period in my life, I was brought up and cared for principally by my aunts, Catherine and Josephine. My mother had died in the influenza epidemic of 1918 and my father, Alphonse Vambe, had become almost a recluse, who shunned even the company of his own children, except when paternal duty compelled him to see and talk to us. From the things people said about his earlier life I understood that it was the death of his wife that had extinguished the flame which had burned lustroously in him. He had been full of vitality, a forthright and self-assured person, qualities which no doubt worked in his favour when he won the hand of Agnes Dambudzo, my mother, whom many individuals in Chishawasha described as a beautiful, kind and intelligent woman. Many young men had tried to woo her, and we can understand that Alphonse provoked admiration as well as jealousy when he won the favours of this tall, elegant-looking girl, whom the nuns and Father Richartz regarded as a special pupil at the school. He was as proud of her as he was deeply in love with her. He built her a big house, the first house of stone constructed by an African in Chishawasha. The white missionaries must have seen something particularly reliable in him, for they picked him out for the important position of driving their horse-drawn coach, which frequently took them to Salisbury and back.

This promising world was shattered for my father with the death of my mother. He was never to be quite the same man. For a long time he withdrew from the company of others, and until well into the middle of the 1930s he would not entertain the thought of marrying again, which was rare for an African, especially of his time and age. However, finally, he fell in love with a woman in the Mrewa district, where he spent most of his time, coming to Chishawasha to see us on very rare occasions. The impression he created in my mind was that of a gentle, quiet person, in whom there was a permanent state of sadness,

as well as someone who would never consciously hurt anyone by word or deed. He died in 1951, and was buried at Chishawasha as his wife was over thirty years before.

However, growing up in a rich and varied family environment, I did not feel especially deprived by the withdrawn behaviour of my father. As a child, I was fascinated by the intriguing diversity of personalities among those who lived in Gopera. In trying to come to terms with modern life against the background of dying traditions, each person groped his own way through the maze of ideas, fashions and social conventions of white civilization in their own way. Some of these people remain indelibly printed on my mind.

Uncle John Nyamayaro seemed to typify best of all the adaptable character of most of his generation and the urge to go the whole way in fitting themselves into the European way of life. He was the husband of my aunt Catherine. He had accepted the necessity of attending school at Chishawasha, with its irksome academic life and Spartan discipline. Since leaving school he had never been out of work, nor did he drift from one form of employment to another. Throughout his working life he served the Post Office devotedly. Not surprisingly, the gulf between his way of life and that of his parents was vast. He used to have bacon and eggs for breakfast. His favourite drink was Black and White whisky. He read his newspaper regularly and was well-informed about national affairs. Despite his meagre wages, he always managed to build himself big houses and furnish them. After considerable difficulty, he managed to get the necessary permit from the Native Commissioner to buy a fowling-piece, no mean testimony to his good character, as the Government, thinking bitterly of 1896, did not generally trust Africans with any kind of firearms. At a time when discrimination on grounds of colour was being intensified, men like John Nyamayaro sustained my confidence and pride in being black.

Then there was the head of our particular family, Jakobob. He was something of an enigma. In his kindness and devotion to family duty, he was very much like Mizha, but being a much younger man he was much more volatile. Like Madzidza, he had a rich sense of humour and considerable wit, but whereas grandmother's was rough, Jakobob's was more subtle. A great many of the funny things he said were about himself, but what

made him unusual was his lack of spurious African nationalism. Not for him the false notion that the Africans' backwardness was entirely due to the Europeans. In fact, he counterbalanced grandmother's view. He was outraged by the apparent blindness, the spinelessness and easy-going nature of all black people, and expressed these views most outrageously when he had drunk some beer. He loved beer parties, they gave him an appropriate platform, and when he was amply stocked, his eyes flashed and nothing restrained him from telling his people the bitter truth about themselves.

He would, for instance, remind those prepared to listen to him that we had only ourselves to blame for defeat in the 1896 struggle. We had begun the war with many advantages, but as time went on, he would say, our stamina and resourcefulness dwindled to such an extent that many of our people lost heart, went over to the enemy and enabled the white man to flush our soldiers out of their rock fastnesses. Since then, bullied and corrupted, we had made no other attempt to free ourselves and were willing enough to slave for the settlers. In Jakobo's view, all black people, whoever they were and wherever they came from were *mbuzi* (goats), whose passive patience was unending. But he himself of course was different—and to give him his due he did prove his point by refusing to work for Europeans for as long as I knew him.

Had such a point of view been expressed at any modern African political rally, the speaker would have been stoned. As it was, Jakobo always provoked furious arguments with those who, like Madzidza, attributed the unhappy lot of the African directly to white rule.

I found these discussions stimulating and enlightening, because they gave me a chance to see both sides of the question. The notion that the tribal African, if not misled by people with Communist leanings, is apolitical, is one of the most dangerous delusions nursed by white Rhodesia. The people of Chishawasha, whatever their education, were continually involved in discussions of this kind, and that at a time when Communism was as far removed from the Africans of Southern Rhodesia as Shintoism is from the English today.

In Mashonganyika village many people, especially those of my grandmother's generation, had gone about scantily dressed in their *nhembe* (short leather aprons covering only the genitals)

and no one had seen any shame or offence in bared breasts. But now this traditional state of innocence was unacceptable. By now most traditionalists had left the Mission and the remainder conformed to the demand that people should be fully clothed, including Madzidza, in spite of her relentless volleys against all things foreign. But while the younger people were guided by the way the settlers dressed, the older members of the tribe dressed much less conventionally. Like elderly hippies, they dressed to suit themselves and no one else.

For Jakobo, for instance, one article of clothing, except perhaps a skirt, was as good as another. He saw no inconsistency in wearing women's blouses, men's tailcoats without matching pairs of trousers, or riding breeches without boots or leggings. Hats had a special fascination for Jakobo, and he had a whole selection of them, men's as well as women's, cast-offs from the settlers in Salisbury.

Clad in an incongruous collection of finery, he would be swept into an imaginary world of pomp and circumstance. He would don a hat, for instance, or pick up a walking-stick and jauntily stride about, telling people that he felt like the Governor on his way to a game of golf and tennis. He was a compulsive showman, and while possessed of considerable knowledge of the white world, he admired many of its features in a child-like manner. Sometimes he would contrive some sort of a uniform and cast himself as a military general—one of the calibre of a Napoleon at least. Then he would dream of marching on Europe to give the white races a taste of their own medicine by turning their part of the world into an African colonial Empire. And yet, if a serious problem arose, he was capable of switching off these fantasies and offering sober ideas and advice.

However, in a changing world, ours was still in many respects a peculiarly African society. Grandmother was still a force for the old Shona world, if a diminishing one, and she continued to remind us that our heritage was not to be discarded altogether just because we owned bicycles or drank whisky. She and her friends were always ready to question the wisdom and the judgement of the overzealous admirers of the new culture, and held on to their, as it turns out, uncannily accurate, view that the road some of us were taking would not lead to greater freedom. Madzidza always felt that we were

deceiving ourselves and would pay dearly for our folly. If she were alive today, she would say: 'I told you so.'

Quite a few people managed to keep one foot in the African world and the other in the European one. If Jakobo was one of them, Nherera, one of my uncles (another son of the late Chief Mashonganyika by one of his several wives) was another. The administration was making genuine efforts to recruit some of the young men of the tribe into the police and Nherera responded to this call. He served the Government for many years, and worked under several different Native Commissioners. As a member of an important tribe and son of a Chief, he would seem to have been treated with favour. He was trusted and promoted and ended up as a senior native messenger, a high rank, and for him a great achievement. A local man in the Government service during the post-rebellion era enjoyed immense prestige among people who had accepted defeat and looked at their future in terms of the new system imposed upon them. Thus, he was regarded as a cut above the ordinary African, if at times some of his people resented and feared the authority invested in him.

Nherera saw no contradiction in maintaining divided loyalties. During his service with the Government he found it natural to take more than one wife. Though a Christian in name, he married three in the end. Up to the beginning of the Second World War, multiple wives seemed to enhance the status of any African servant of the Government, especially in the Native Affairs Department, whose policy was to encourage black people to stick to their customs and to preserve their ignorance along with their racial and cultural heritage.

The three wives of Nherera were all attractive and intelligent. But they were also individually strong-willed. The custom governing women who married a polygamist stipulated that each should obey and respect both the husband and the senior wife. While he was in remote areas untainted by the social changes and Christian influences such as prevailed at Chishawasha, he had little difficulty in reigning over his large domestic establishment, which eventually included nine children. When he retired and we moved to Loyola, he came and settled close to us.

The education of his children was one of the reasons why he chose to settle near us—this was an area in which he prided

himself in having a modern outlook. Also, like any retired colonial official, he considered himself an expert in government and the complexities of rural administration. He was a fine story-teller and had a vast stock of anecdotes, full of romance and adventure, drawn from his long experience as a government messenger in different districts of Mashonaland. 'When I was in such and such an area', he would begin, and then would follow some tale of a lion, a dangerous criminal—or a peculiar white official. Uncle Nherera was entirely unpolitical: years of being a small cog in the wheel of the Rhodesian government had bred in him an uncritical mentality which accepted law and order as an indispensable condition of every society, regardless of who designed and enforced the system. But at the same time, he was so sure of his own noble lineage that he took it for granted that most Europeans, except perhaps the highest-ranking officials, were his inferiors.

Unfortunately, once he had exposed his wives to the atmosphere of Chishawasha and Salisbury, a change took place in his domestic life which did little for his enjoyment of retirement. He had built each of his wives and respective children a separate house and granary, so that they had a most distinctive kraal all of their own. The grass-thatched cottages looked exactly alike and were separated from each other by a few yards. This arrangement made it easy for the various members of his family to know one another's business, right down to the smallest attention and favour granted by Nherera to any one of them. It proved to be a constant source of friction. They quarrelled. They fought. Scarcely a day passed without some kind of commotion. Their animosity seemed to blossom at sunset, when each family would begin to shout abuse at one another. Some days, all three would fight for three different reasons, another day two would gang up against the other and at other times, the three wives and all their children would find common cause against Nherera himself. At every sharing out of meat, money or simple gifts from him, they would claim favouritism and unfairness. He would always end up the worse for it.

To Christians, women especially, Nherera's misfortunes were excellent ammunition in their attack on the whole institution of polygamy. My aunts, for example, did not hide their fear that their own husbands might also take extra wives, and showed no sympathy whatsoever for Nherera. 'He deserves all he is

getting,' they would say, and laugh about it, believing that this chaotic situation would make their own husbands think very hard before letting their own polygamous tendencies get the better of them. Most women were genuinely grateful that Christianity had undermined this practice. There was no question that the emancipated status of these women made the wives of Nherera resent their own position more and more. Whereas in their homeland these women would have been proud to be married to him, even envied by others, in Chishawasha they discovered that their marital condition was anachronistic. Consequently they were ashamed and tormented Nherera as much as possible.

In Rhodesia, perhaps even more today than in the past, few African women can truthfully say that they have not been tempted to use *mupfuwira*. This is the general term for certain herbs which are mixed together in powder form and served to husbands in their food. *Mupfuwira* is simply a love potion, believed to stimulate sexual passion. But it is alleged that too many doses of this mysterious blend can turn a man into such an Olympic lover that he is in danger of finding his strength sapped, even to the point of shortening his life.

Naturally, wagging tongues in Gopera speculated how much *mupfuwira* Nherera was unwittingly taking. If he had been fed this concoction by each of his wives, he would have been taking no less than three daily doses and that, the village gossips insisted, was too much, even for the strongest man. But Nherera, small, spare, sometimes frail-looking though he was, lived on to a ripe old age, still with his wives, while most of his sons joined the government service either as police constables or messengers in the Native Affairs Department.

Among white Rhodesians, a child merely exists on the fringes of adult society until he is grown up. Up to at least the age of eight, he has a black nanny to provide him with the care, love and companionship that would otherwise come from his parents. We saw much evidence of this in Chishawasha; most of the white families who stopped their cars on the side of the road for picnics had African nannies in constant attendance on the children. These Europeans only seemed concerned with their food and freedom, leaving it to their African employees

to feed, amuse, and keep their children from harm. In other words, white children were closer to their black guardians than to their natural parents. The strange thing was that once their offspring had reached a certain age, these same white parents stopped at nothing in poisoning their minds against the very black men and women who had looked after them with such devotion at their tenderest age.

My childhood, like that of any other African child, was very different from that of my European opposite number. We were intimate with the life, opinions, virtues and weaknesses of the adult world of Gopera. The older people accepted us completely as themselves at an early age, and we were free to pick up and absorb the essentials of our environment. I certainly cannot recall any one of my relatives saying, 'Have a sweet and go away and play'. On the contrary, I learned constantly, by listening and observing, and noticed how adults behaved, whether they were happy or sad, sober or otherwise. In this way, not only a rich variety of personalities, but also some of the strange customs of the tribe were unfolded to me.

I had an older cousin, Francis Kaseke. When his father Gukwe died, he, his younger brother and their mother Matopodzi continued to live at the nearby village of Che-Gomo. Being so closely related (Gukwe was my father's elder brother), I went to visit them as often as possible. They were an interesting family for Matopodzi had a considerable reputation as a medium and their home was frequently crowded with visitors. They had to entertain fairly lavishly, foregoing some of their privacy in the interests of their clients, whose difficulties usually sprang from sickness that white doctors were unable to cure. Many people, especially if they came from outside Chishawasha, simply stuck to their old ways and came straight to people like Matopodzi, who had a supra-natural approach to human ailments.

Matopodzi's role was to communicate with the dead, who caused or allowed these problems to occur, and then tell the client what to do to eliminate the sickness. She was not a dispenser of herbs, but she recommended other healers who could deal with the physical side of things. Hers was a *shave* (spirit), supposedly from somewhere in Portuguese East Africa. To invite it into the person of Matopodzi, the client had to give her something, such as a single maize seed, a threepenny piece,

tickey, or an ordinary wristwatch. She placed the object in the palm of her left hand and when the spirit came, she went through a series of physical contortions and hiccups, rubbing what was in her hand and speaking some foreign, though related, tongue. She asked many questions of the client. Somehow the truth would emerge from the strange dialogue, and Matopodzi would recommend what steps should be taken to deal with the problem, and everybody went away happy in the knowledge that they could cope with life and its burdens.

From the experience I gained at this time in Chishawasha and later on in other parts of Rhodesia and South Africa, I can confidently say that large numbers of white South Africans of Dutch extraction shared many of these beliefs and practices. Faced with the enigmatic forces of nature, some of these arch-priests of racial purity did not hesitate to call black people into the sanctity of their homes to cure their sicknesses, give them luck in love or money, or to bless them with some hidden power which would enable them to deal with life.

Francis Kaseke showed no inclination whatever to enter the employment of a European. His motives were as political as those of Jakobo. He felt that his dignity and freedom would be compromised if he were to put himself under the orders of a people whose right to his country he did not recognize. This attitude solidified into an inflexible resolution after he was insulted by a white man who called him a 'cheeky black *bobojaan*' (baboon). He never forgot this affront.

To compensate for this self-imposed restriction on his means of earning a living, he took up carpentry as a self-employed person. Francis became very accomplished, to such an extent that he received many local orders for his well-made but simple functional furniture. With a little more training, more cash resources and better tools, Francis could have built himself a substantial local woodwork business. But his enterprise never went beyond the local African market, which was limited not only by low incomes, but also by the fact that as time went on the majority wanted the more finished products of European manufacture.

However, Francis was by no means a narrow-minded conservative tribalist. Except for his refusal to join the employment trail to Salisbury, his mind was wide open to new ideas. He mocked all hide-bound conventions and saw beauty and

joy in nature. He played the mouth organ with great skill, which made him popular at social functions, where modern music was an essential ingredient. He was astonishingly good-looking, and he had a fatal attraction for many a woman in this increasingly emancipated African society. At this time Chishawasha was a remarkable magnet to women of easy virtue from Salisbury and other places. Many of the local women too had emerged from their traditional role of excessive modesty and subservience. Some of them had a highly developed sense of dress, the result of European influence, and those who had taken to using soap and other beauty aids were hard to resist. Naturally they exacerbated the kind of tribal strains that the people of old Mashonganyika village had foreseen and dreaded.

Now at that time, when a Shona woman was about to give birth to a child, tribal law required that the husband should make a full confession of the number of times he had slept with other women. If he had real concern for the welfare of his wife and the child to be born, then he did not dare refuse to come clean and name the women involved. This confession of sin took place while the wife was in labour, and the more painful and prolonged the wife's period of pain, the more pressed the husband was to tell all. Hiding the truth was tantamount to an act of wilful murder, for it was believed that the child and the mother could die as a result of it. However, to save him embarrassment, the husband was cross-examined in privacy by a close female relation, usually his father's sister.

In the case of Francis Kaseke, this delicate duty was entrusted to our mutual aunt, Dekete, and I was allowed to be present. Perhaps they both wished me to acquire some education in an aspect of Shona life which I would have to face when I became a man. And so while I hung about, Dekete in her quiet but dogged way, prodded and quizzed Francis in an endeavour to extract from him all the facts concerning his conquests from the moment when his wife conceived until the present. He always pretended to be innocent, but in Dekete he had a skilful, persistent questioner and a fanatical interpreter of tribal law. While he kept his good humour, grinning and laughing as though he were playing at holding a quiz with his aunt, Dekete maintained a grim face and told him *Unenge imbgwa yaba mukaka* ('You look like a dog that has stolen milk'). She had Francis

beaten in the end, and he eventually revealed his past misdeeds.

After Francis had satisfied her that he had told all, Dekete would rebuke him and command him to give up altogether his wanton indulgences, lest his wife should die. Francis, still grinning and avoiding her piercingly accusing eyes, made some sort of promise, saying *Zwakanaka* ('It is all right, I understand'). These apparently contrite avowals meant nothing, of course, but for the time being they had served a purpose in calming Dekete. Then she would take her leave of Francis and walk back to the house where Njaidza, his wife, lay in the agony of birth and tell her as well as his mother, Matopodzi, what she had squeezed out of him.

It was a strange custom, but I came to believe that it was in fact a shrewd device by the Shona people to check promiscuity. My cousin's revelations certainly did not do much good. His wife had more stillbirths and miscarriages than any other woman I knew then, and more often than not, after long and painful periods of labour. What was particularly distressing was that she was convinced that her sufferings were caused not only by her husband's affairs, but also by his failure to come out with all the facts. I remember her calling him again and again *Gonyora* ('Fiend, murderer'). Such was her distress due to the tradition which ordained that there was a link between the way a woman gave birth and the way her husband had behaved during the time that they had not slept together.

In the West, a man threatened with the exposure of an illicit affair often, if he has a name to protect, goes to pieces and allows himself to be blackmailed. Few Africans would lose any sleep over this kind of blackmail. A person born and bred in true African tradition would probably tell the blackmailer to go ahead and let his wife and friends know about his waywardness. No one would be shocked. Married men, in the tribe who were obliged to divulge their misbehaviour, accepted the usefulness of the custom and after the necessary pressures confessed their misdeeds, not, I suspect, without a certain amount of secret pride. Even more remarkable was the attitude of the wronged wives. They simply swallowed their wounded pride and hoped for the best in the future. This custom had a striking parallel with what all good Christians in Chishawasha were persuaded to do, namely tell their sins to the priest in the confessional if they wished to be forgiven and escape the consequences of their wrongs.

The missionaries at Chishawasha took the education of all young Africans very seriously, and the priests and nuns used to call on all the villages from time to time to ensure that no child escaped schooling. Just before we left the village of Mashongan-yika, the Rev. Father Seed paid us such a visit. His presence attracted a crowd of beady-eyed boys and girls and, with great tact and a benign approach, the priest surveyed each one of us, asking our ages and other relevant questions. As he went through this routine, he put down some of our names in his little book, telling us that he expected these children to attend school in the coming year. My name was not taken down and I knew that I was too young. But soon after we had settled down in our new home, four nuns rode into the village on donkeys and, just as Father Seed had done, took the ages of each one of the large group of children who gathered round them. I was ten, and this time my name was written down. I understood that my days of village freedom were numbered.

Not long after the nuns were gone, grandmother Madzidza decided to take me on a visit to her younger sister who lived in the Goromonzi area of Chinyika, very near the Arcturus mines. It was early in the month of January, 1927. We went on foot. When we came to the Mapfeni River, we found it in full flood and it was a frightening prospect. Like all African rivers at this time of year, it was heaving and roaring with angry, khaki-brown currents of water, which covered considerable areas of both banks. Faced with the raging fury of nature, most adults would have felt discretion to be the better part of valour and returned to Chishawasha. But Madzidza, a strong believer in the protective powers of the ancestors, considered she had taken out some kind of spiritual insurance against the hazards of the journey through this wild and relatively unoccupied area. Just before we reached the river, she stopped near a certain tree, where she bowed down and called on the dead, especially Chief Nzwere, to guide and defend us against any danger. At the end

of her loud prayers, she placed two or three stones between the branches of that tree, and from that moment on, her self-confidence was complete. She continued as if she had not a care in the world. Thus when we came to it, the flooded Mapfeni did not alter her resolve to get to the other side. But for a moment this faith seemed to have been misplaced. Just as we reached mid-stream, the furious currents of the river sent us hurtling down like helpless creatures, until some of the trees and rocks in our path to death gave us hand and foot holds, and enabled us to reach the other side. There was no doubt that Madzidza was shaken by the fear of death as much as I was. On the other bank, she immediately went down on her knees and said heart-felt prayers of thanksgiving to 'Nzwere'. She clapped her hands loudly to him, as if he were alive and present. Then we continued our journey, reaching Chinyika without any further trouble.

Grandmother's sister lived on the edge of the farm belonging to a white man called 'Bucha' (probably Butcher), a very fat individual, who went about his extensive lands on a well-groomed brown horse. Chinyika was an African area. But the many Africans who lived near Madzidza's sister were obliged to work for Bucha and other white farmers nearby. For a whole day's sweat and toil, a man, woman or child was given so many pounds or ounces of maize-meal, *hupfu whe mugayiwa*. There was no mistaking the fact that Bucha, like all the other white farmers, had strong authority over these black people. I worked for him once and I hated it. We did not get any food during the day. Working in boiling sun and on only one meal which we had at home, we had to get rid of the quantities of weeds, which grew in profusion between the maize plants. We were not expected to take rest-breaks and if we did and were noticed by Bucha, that meant less maize-meal at the end of the day. I was also sent out to Mr Forbes' farm where the work was just as hard, but he was a kinder and fairer man and my reward was a little more generous.

This experience utterly spoiled my two weeks' stay in Chinyika, convincing me that our life in Chishawasha was very much more civilized and freer than elsewhere. The thing that struck me most forcibly was the white man's attitude to black people. Bucha, in particular, did not seem to regard us as human beings. When he rode through his fields to see how well we

were working, he shouted at us and made lewd jokes at the women. He also pinched their buttocks, a revolting thing to do openly in the eyes of the African people. Little did he realize that one of the little piccaninnies who worked for him and to whom he gave only sixpence-worth of maize-meal for more than eight hours' drudgery was fuming internally with rage for a long time after and saw him as a heartless tyrant.

One day my Aunt Josephine's husband, Martin, came from Chishawasha on a bicycle, saying that he had been sent by the school authorities to bring me home so that I could start my education. It was wonderful news inasmuch as it cut short the misery of this visit and I left vowing that I would never settle in any Native Reserve, especially one so near white farmers.

Back home, I did not relish the prospect of being beaten up and generally terrorized by the teachers and bigger boys as I had heard my uncle Marimo had been. However, there was no way out of it and soon enough I became used to rising early every morning, except Sundays, and running the four or five miles to school. During the first two years, I went to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, run by the Dominican Sisters who, like the Jesuit priests and lay brothers at the nearby boys' college at this time, were predominantly German. They took both boys and girls to start with, but after two years, the boys were passed on to the care of the Fathers. The girls, however, stayed on at the Convent for the full course, about six years. Both establishments took day scholars and boarders, depending on their age and family circumstances. The nuns kept most of the pupils and very young boys and girls who were orphans or came from broken homes. Many of these were born of black mothers and white fathers who had not been able to live together because of the colour bar, which was already an established feature of life in Southern Rhodesia.

Even as young as I was, I could understand from what I saw at the Convent of the Sacred Heart that there was a colossal amount of miscegenation going on in Rhodesia, which made the white man appear illogical as well as callous. As I was to find out later, many European men were willing to sleep with black women, but they would not accept the responsibility of the children born of these unions. It was left to the African

women to clothe, feed and decide the future of these offspring. The extent of Government concern for these boys and girls was shown only by the requirement that their births should be reported to the Native Commissioners, who usually ordered the mothers to send them to institutions like Chishawasha. Rhodesian settlers, very much like the British in India, encouraged people of mixed parentage to regard themselves as belonging to a different race from either black or white. Thus after a few years of this policy, coupled with certain privileges as an inducement to accept their buffer status, these men and women became a separate community who demanded and were granted separate schools, hospitals and residential areas, and a special wage-structure as well. Thus, in Rhodesian vocabulary, as in South Africa, a 'coloured' person means someone who has black and white blood. Accordingly, he is allowed a little more freedom of choice, movement and speech than the African. Strange as it may sound, especially in view of its present stand on this question, the Catholic Church was quick to endorse this new racial division in Rhodesia, and set up special schools for the coloured people.

I started as a day scholar. It had many advantages, but it meant having to rise very early in the morning in order to be in time for Mass at 6 a.m., attendance at which was compulsory. As a result, one did not have time for a decent meal. The nuns did not provide any food for day pupils, and so we often went without anything to eat until late afternoon or evening when we got back home. For this reason we had no scruples about plundering the Mission orchard and helping ourselves to its rich harvest of oranges, guavas, grapes and various other fruits. To these were added wild fruits such as *mazhanje*, *hute*, *matamba* etc, when they were in season, and which we picked up from the nearby forests as we walked back home. How we managed to learn without anything in our stomachs amazes me today. But I had been conditioned at home to eat only just enough not to feel hungry. Sheer gluttonous indulgence in food was considered a vice and we deliberately made it a virtue to eat as little as possible. The white man's habit, which the educated African aped, of eating three times a day, with tea breaks thrown in, was considered despicable, a kind of debauchery and moral corruption, which explained the parasitic nature of the Europeans.

In any case, learning was such an enjoyable experience during

those two years at the Convent of the Sacred Heart that we did not stop to think about hunger. This was due to the infinite patience, devotion and efficiency of the nuns who taught us. They seldom lost their tempers and when they did and punished us, we took it in good heart. The sheer novelty of it all made education seem the richest and most rewarding of the benefits of European civilization. What is more, the Convent surroundings were beautiful and its buildings of striking red brick, with roofs of grey corrugated sheets of zinc, and the gardens of riotously coloured flowers, surrounded by hedges and trees looked exquisite. The orchards were neat and carefully tended by the nuns who seemed to be under some sort of compulsion to drive themselves like slaves. Everything about the wooden-floored classrooms was pretty. Nothing was out of place; every piece of furniture was dusted and polished, so that there was a pleasantness and order which we were sincerely proud to be part of. This was brought to near perfection by the warmth and complete self-abnegation of the nuns, who glided about the premises with that mixture of feminine delicacy and determined firmness for which these disciplined women all over the world are well known. I remember some of them. There was my first teacher, Sister Borromeo, with her strong aquiline nose, and her successor, Sister Roberta, who played *shumshum*—the violin—so adeptly. There was the ever-smiling Sister Lambertina and, of course, the Reverend Mother Peter, slight of figure and dignified, who cast a subtle, gentle authority all around. And then there were the bulky, stocky Sister Warburga, the cook, and the irrepressible Sister Diana, whose temper, when it exploded, reminded us from time to time that these dedicated women were human beings after all.

Indeed, the whole of Chishawasha Mission of that day was a perfect example of the sense of order and hard work with which the Germans are endowed. Everything they put their hand to was accomplished with energetic, superior efficiency and it was a prosperous enterprise, which produced locally anything from beef, tobacco and limes to table wines. Every lay brother was a master craftsman in something. By unremitting physical and mental effort they had turned the whole Mission into an almost completely self-sustaining farm and school. Soon enough I got to know some of these men and women: for instance, bean-stalk tall Brother Lindner, from Austria, who was the gentle manager

of all the farming operations; the peripatetic, loquacious Brother Breitten, the gardener and wine expert as well as cook; the very freckled, very blond and meek Brother Krechel, the stone mason, who turned the soft rock from various parts of Chishawasha into beautiful works of art; the dark-haired, generous Brother Timmer, the blacksmith, who always brought bits of food from the community's table and popped them into our mouths; and the massive, benign Brother Puff, the master-carpenter, who made anything from suites of furniture to ox-wagons. As for the priest in charge, Father Schmitz, tall and imposing, he was a German to his very fingertips, not only in his industry but also in the maintenance of discipline.

Mass lasted for about thirty to forty-five minutes. Then, guided by the nuns, we walked in a long line, two abreast, from the Church to the Convent about a quarter of a mile away at the foot of a hill. At about 8 a.m. the school bell rang and we trooped into our classes, where the first thing we did was to say our prayers, followed by about thirty minutes of reciting answers from the Catechism. I did not have much trouble in learning this little digest of Catholic doctrine from cover to cover parrot-fashion. But, occasionally, I felt depressed and overwhelmed by the implications of parts of its teaching. For example, we were taught that God had no beginning and no end. My young mind could not grasp this lofty theological point. I found myself turning over and over in my brain how it was possible that God was timeless. Because I could not comprehend this fact of eternity, I sometimes felt physically sick with worry.

Also, to start with, our ancestors were completely missing from the teaching of the Church. That bothered me too, until later on the black martyrs of Uganda, such as Kizito, were introduced. I accepted entirely that God was all goodness, as the nuns kept emphasizing. But sooner or later my brain wanted to understand why God, having created human beings out of the profound goodness of his heart, at the same time inflicted us all with evil, pain, sorrow and death, including Limbo and that awful place, Hell, which, in the language of the nuns, was one huge flaming furnace, where sinners kept burning for eternity. Trying to fathom such mysteries threw me into utter despair and a temporary state of schizophrenia. Fortunately I was able to cast aside these morbid and incom-

prehensible abstract ideas when other lessons supplanted religious instruction. We learned the alphabet, writing, reading and arithmetic, which we called sums, and by about twelve o'clock we had done our full day's academic work. Occasionally, we helped the sisters in their gardens or collected firewood from the nearby hill. Thereafter we dispersed to our various homes.

Everywhere people are fascinated by the supernatural, things that seem uncanny, but are just recognizable enough to be part of their physical existence. Tales of ghosts, witches and wizards that had actually driven my two brothers and sister from the Convent ten years before were still being told with relish at this time. Every morning many of the big girl boarders tried to tell everyone about their latest experience of the supposed visitors from this mystery world. From all these various accounts we had the impression that the Mission cemetery, once darkness had descended, was filled with an army of mischievous spooks who took a special pleasure in trying to strangle and frighten the Convent girls out of their beds. Only years later did I find the answer to these visitations. A number of male students at the boys' school used to steal out at night and venture into the Convent grounds to meet their girlfriends. I then came to the not improbable conclusion that these boys and girls had agreed to create these scares as a cover for their clandestine meetings.

Yet at no time did these stories spoil my two years at the Convent. On the contrary, the whole period passed smoothly and pleasantly. I learned that the world was a great deal more kind, interesting and promising than it had appeared to be when grandmother was attacking white rule and all its abominations. I felt then that the culture from which these nuns came must be one of the finest of human creations. For it had produced these white women, who were giving so much of their life to enlighten us and enable us to get more out of life than we would have known if left to the limited horizons of our own culture. The nuns radiated happiness and confidence in everyone all the time. These delicate, prettily robed sisters, I thought, were surely the best representatives of white civilization.

But when I moved to the boys' section of the school, the situation altered dramatically. For the time being at any rate, this establishment was dominated by African teachers, who

were not only poorly educated, but also were the products of Father Biehler's draconian discipline. Father Biehler had been the first principal of the school and had left a harsh tradition behind him. The majority of the senior boys, taking their example from the teachers, were behaving little better than brutes. For me this was a real man's world, although oddly the head of this all-male school was at this time a nun, Sister Eleanora. She was as stern as the proverbial hospital matron. Father Schmitz, then her superior at the Mission, remained strictly aloof from the school, his boundless, bubbling energies being entirely devoted to architecture, painting and the business side of the farm. His incursions into school affairs were only made when there had been a serious breach of discipline and his authority was terrifying, whether expressed by voice or by the cane. He did not joke with anyone, pupil or teacher, and seldom did he smile, which made him a man to avoid. Thus we junior boys were thrashed, kicked about and abused by the teachers and the senior scholars alike and we were too afraid of our superior to appeal to him for protection.

It was clear that this was quite the wrong time to become a student. Since the departure of Father Biehler and with no Government supervision and inadequate funds, teaching standards had steadily declined, and appear to have been at their lowest level when, at the age of twelve, I was transferred from the Convent. The emphasis was now more on manual work than on books, perhaps because those in charge had become as disillusioned as the Africans with the Government's reactionary native education policy. The essence of this policy was that the Africans did not need much book education nor the serious technical training of the kind that had been given by the earlier Jesuit Fathers. Consequently, instead of spending our time absorbing the white man's academic knowledge, to which we felt fully entitled, we were put to physical tasks for the greater part of a normal school-day.

However, one good thing happened during this period. For some time bullying had been unchecked, and now some of the senior boys were beginning to stage fights between smaller boys. The boy who was beaten was considered a coward and therefore qualified for further punishment from the senior boys. Some of the sons of Nherera, my uncle, were among the ring-leaders in the organization of this cruel sport. But it happened

that Jakobo's elder son, Rudolph, was the victim of these gladiatorial contests so frequently that he started to bleed excessively. In accordance with the rules of the game, he had never spoken of the fighting to his parents, but now when his father and mother demanded from him an explanation of a condition that looked as if it might lead to his death, he had to do so. People in our part of Chishawasha could hardly believe their ears when Rudolph told the full facts, and for once Jakobo, his wife and other parents decided to face the Superior of the Mission, the teachers and everyone else involved in the discipline of the students. The fierce row that these people raised, plus the state that Rudolph was in, convinced the Mission authorities that they should put an end to these acts of brutality. Fortunately, Rudolph survived his haemorrhage.

For me, however, an improvement in the behaviour of the senior boys did not begin to put right what was a basically unreformable system. The majority of our teachers were still untrained and free with the use of the cane. The policy of less teaching and more manual work was still in practice. I was wasting my time. Meanwhile my brothers and various other relations appeared to be going from strength to strength in their endeavours in Salisbury. Under pressure such as this I felt I had very good reasons for hitting the freedom road to Salisbury. I told Freddy Taderera, a much older boy than myself, what was in my mind and his answer was, 'Excellent, we will go together'.

And so, early one morning in 1930, we left home as if we were going to school in the usual way, but instead we headed for Salisbury, which we reached shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. I was thirteen, but I felt old enough to work and to face the challenges of town life. I thought I was a gift to Salisbury and that any white person would be grateful for my services and appreciate my school background.

Having so many relations, the problems of food and accommodation did not arise. But the cousins and nephews and uncles we called on spoiled their hospitality by asking awkward questions and quickly realizing that both Freddy and I had run away from school. They were therefore qualified in their welcome to us. But we had only called on a few houses in Rhodes Avenue, when Freddy, by reason of his age and height,

was engaged as a house-boy. It was good news for me as well, because I knew that he could always feed and give me a place to sleep until I was employed.

But for three to four days I tramped the streets of Salisbury and stopped at every house, at which I called out either to the 'Madam' or 'Baas' the usual sentence: '*Mina funa musevenzi*—I am looking for work'. Each time they took a look at me and shook their heads. I was too young. Finally, however, I went to the Salisbury Golf Club for casual work as a caddy. One of the permanent employees at the Club persuaded his employer that I should be taken on permanently as a general helping hand. My first task was to walk in front of a span of oxen which pulled a cart that carried the gravel for keeping the golf course level and in general good order. In the evening, I was taken to the sleeping quarters of the African employees, which adjoined the building that housed the oxen and the mules. Our quarters were like pig sties, dirty, dank and smelly, and with mud floors. The stench of animal dung and the unwashed blankets of my fellow Africans gave me the most uncomfortable night I had ever had. All their talk was about women and included all the most sordid details. They spat all over the place. Their cooking pots looked as if they had never been washed and I refused to eat the food put before me. They played cards for half the night. They used obscene language and did not care what I thought.

I did not sleep well and only waited for dawn to break so that I could escape from this animal existence. I found it difficult to believe that grown-up human beings could live like the oxen and the mules which they were looking after and be proud of working under these conditions. I had never felt so superior before, and the way to show it was not to stay there a minute longer than was absolutely necessary. Thus, as soon as the first rays of the rising sun shone through the eaves of our cramped quarters, I dressed and quietly walked out.

Some distance away, I called at a house and was pleased when an African servant informed me that a lady lodger was looking for someone to work for her. He fetched her and she started asking me all kinds of questions. Had I worked before? Could I sweep, make beds, serve tea, etc? To all but the first of these questions, I eagerly said 'yes', so keen was I to be taken into the domestic service.

'You can start right away, if you follow me, boy,' she said at last.

For a moment I was speechless, scarcely able to digest my good fortune and the generosity of this pretty, elegant white woman. My heart pumping fast, I followed her, almost tripping her up, so excited was I at this great moment. We entered her bedroom. She explained in a matter-of-fact way what I was expected to do and I replied 'yes' to everything that she said. But I was really not taking in much of what she was saying, all of it was so overpowering. Satisfied that I had been well briefed in my duties, she asked me to start with the bed and went out. Left alone, I decided to have a good look around and take stock of the atmosphere and contents of her pleasant room.

Then I began to do what I could to justify myself. But I had not been left alone for long when I overheard a conversation going on outside between the same lady and another African man who was applying for a job. Looking through the window, I saw that he was a big man and I heard him outlining what sounded a most impressive record of his experience in housework. When he was asked how much he wished to be paid per month, he said he expected at least ten shillings. The lady said that the most she was prepared to offer him was seven and sixpence per month. When she offered him less than he demanded, I thought that he would go away, but I was wrong, for after a little reflection the man said that he was after all prepared to accept seven and sixpence. I knew then that my short-lived luck was out. The lady wasted no time. Calling me out, she told me in the nicest possible way that I was too young and too inexperienced to work for her. She gave me a large slice of bread and dismissed me.

Everything looked punk as I walked away from that house in North Avenue. I was fed up. What was there left for me to do but go to see Freddy, who was only a few streets away. But just as I was approaching his place through a narrow lane, I saw my father and Freddy's too, engaged in a conversation with Freddy's employer. I had had enough disappointments in these few days and I saw no point in trying to avoid them. And so I walked towards them. They were telling the mistress of the house that Freddy had run away from school and that they wished to take him back. She said that she had valued his services, but obviously she could not keep him against the

wishes of his father, particularly if it meant that his family would be evicted from Chishawasha in the event of his not returning. She paid him for the few days he had worked and let his father take him away.

After all my failures, I was secretly pleased that my father had rescued me from the uncertain life I had tried to embrace. Yet it had been an experience well worth having. These few days of 'freedom' had shown me some of the squalor, fear and insecurity of African life, which lay beneath the glamour of the white town. I saw jobless Africans wandering aimlessly in the streets, begging for work and for food. I saw many of them being arrested and handcuffed in public for sitting on the edges of pavements, or for not possessing visiting or other passes. It was all too plain that the black man was an alien in these surroundings. Everywhere Africans were being harassed either by their own terrors or by policemen and white people, who did not like their ways, such as talking with loud voices, spitting in the open, walking in menacing large groups or looking enviously at white property.

I also witnessed how interdependent the whites and the blacks were. Black servants were a necessity of life to every white person in his home, at his office and in every other sphere except in his thinking. Black servants worked in white bedrooms, kitchens, dining-rooms and gardens. Black nannies nursed, washed, clothed, and fed white children and also gave them the love and affection which their parents were reluctant to show to them. At the end of all this, I was convinced that if, for some reason or other, all Africans withdrew their labour and their general goodwill, the pleasant life that the privileged white citizens of Salisbury enjoyed would come to a horrible halt.

By the same token, I realized that these working Africans could not do without the whites either. Every black person who came into the town became wholly dependent for his very survival on the white people. He could not achieve any dream without the goodwill and assistance of the Europeans, who had the wealth and ran the system. I was beginning to realize that in the event of the white man pulling out, the African would be left with nothing more than shattered dreams. It was an interesting discovery.

When I returned to school I was treated as a criminal. It was decided to give me a punishment I would not forget for a long

time. Simon Tawoneyi, the most senior of the African staff, undertook this task himself and used a thick stick, almost the size of a knobkerry, which he brought down on my buttocks something like twenty times.

At home, words rather than the cane were the usual means of correcting a young person. Every adult in my family was convinced that I was a delinquent almost beyond hope of redemption. They all feared I was a disgrace to the whole family. I was weak of character. I was fickle and feckless, they went on and on until I felt a beating was preferable to such a barrage of verbal chastisement. In my grandmother's view, to have preferred life in Salisbury to life at home showed that I had become an easy victim of the white man's snares. I had shown conclusively that I had neither the moral stamina to resist the temptations of white civilization nor a liking for my home, to which I owed everything I had. She wanted to know how much longer I would have needed to remain in that nest of vice before I had become one of the human worms that lived in Salisbury. When I replied that I had not met any thieves, killers or prostitutes, she slapped me down as a liar. From that moment on, I began to feel alienated from her. I continued to appreciate her sense of humour. But I no longer respected her views on things affecting my own future. She was too prejudiced and puritanical to be relied upon for guidance.

The Chishawasha Mission at that period presented a pleasant panorama of neat villages, with fields, cattle kraals and grazing areas, spread around the perimeter of the school, which was the centre of the religious life, education and a symbol of some of the modern ideas with which my people had come to terms. Even white residents of Salisbury were attracted by the scenery and the life here. At weekends there would be numerous European visitors, some on picnics, all over Chishawasha and others at the Mission itself. Far from being merely disgruntled with white rule, the inhabitants of the Chishawasha of that time were also conscious of the advantages of life in their Mission and they made the most of them. Their life had intense vitality, there was a constant movement of people between one village and another, especially on Sundays, and everyone knew each other, or they were related by blood or marriage. It was an intricate and intimate web of relationships, united, as always, in beer, hospitality, common dreams and common problems.

Our area in the east was unquestionably the most beautiful of all. There were hills and thick forests, full of the tall angular trees, known to us as the *minhondo*, *misasa*, *mizhanje*. The 'mizhanje' bore enormous amounts of the fruit *mazhanje*, which we collected and ate all through November and December. Between the Arcturus mines and Gopera, the missionaries reserved an extensive area for their vast herds of cattle. It was, in parts, very wild, and few ordinary people dared go there alone, and as such, it was a natural sanctuary for the few remaining lions and leopards in Chishawasha—and the *magandanga*—bandit.

This area of Gopera was also very fertile. Little wonder that, under the system of land allocation in Rhodesia, the whole of this side of Chishawasha Mission has since been taken away from my people and set aside for the exclusive occupation of Europeans. The few remaining African residents are threatened

with expulsion altogether. A black person such as myself, who grew up there and knows every hill and valley, and its history, would not now be allowed to graze his cattle, nor establish a home there. And if he were to agitate against this, he would immediately be branded a Communist—as if Communists are the only people who will not suffer injustice and exploitation in silence. This form of robbery, like most others before and since, was committed by the Government quietly and with little fuss, from white Rhodesians—and that includes the Jesuit Fathers, whose predecessors gave the VaShawasha people every assurance that Chishawasha would always remain their country. Thus Gopera, alias Loyola, no longer exists as a village.

In an attempt to strike a sensible compromise with the custom of the African people, the missionaries decided in the early days, to appoint Christian chiefs to supplant men like Mashonganyika who spurned the white man's religion. The Fathers simply picked certain men for this purpose on the evidence of their outward religious zeal and claims to a certain influence in the tribe. Thus, each of the Christian villages came under the supervision of this man—*Ishe*, to call him by his official title.

During subsequent years, the majority of the VaShawasha and other people in the Mission made no secret of their objection to the whole principle of white men choosing their leaders for them; the result was that most of these men were fiercely disliked, if not actually hated. They were considered usurpers of an ancient office that was synonymous with Shona freedom and independence. But it was clear that the so-called 'Christian Chief' had come to stay, regardless of what we thought about him. The missionaries were convinced that the *Ishe* fulfilled a Divine mission.

One of the most shocking sights I saw during this period was that of an elderly man called Andrezzi and a woman of about the same age, whose name I cannot recall. Late one particular Sunday morning, as we were coming out after Mass, I saw this man and woman kneeling in the porch just outside the main door of the Church, dressed in sackcloth. Like shameless thieves, they were in this position so as to be in the full gaze of the rest of the congregation. The reason for this public disgrace was that Andrezzi and his 'sweetheart' had been discovered committing the sin of fornication by their *Ishe*, who, as his Christian duty, had told the priest. Andrezzi was a widower and his

woman friend was a widow, but this type of sin was anathema in Chishawasha at that period and, so, in accordance with some Church practice that might have dated back to medieval times, the penance demanded of this hapless couple included the ignominy of kneeling in public, clothed in sackcloth for all to see.

Our *Ishe* in Gopera was called Muzweteni. He was well-connected with the tribe, and no doubt clever. But because he derived his authority from white people and exercised it so zealously, he was probably the most unpopular man in our part of Chishawasha. As a matter of fact, to demonstrate their feelings, they changed his name from Muzweteni to 'Dzwete', that is 'charmer', because his responsibilities seemed to consist mainly in currying favour with white men at the expense of his own people.

Some of the other chiefs were looked upon in no better light. At best they were treated as a kind of joke and at worst they were abused, maligned and all too often threatened with violence. Some years later, during the time that the Rev. Father Francis Ketterer, an English priest, was the superior of the Mission, a dispute arose between Chief Chambeni of the village called Rosario and a local Shawasha aristocrat, descended from one of the ruling houses of the tribe, and one of the remaining few men and women who not only refused to accept the white man's religion, but also spurned chiefly impositions such as Chambeni. Chambeni had come from the Chilimanzi tribe in the Fort Victoria district and was therefore considered an outsider, particularly by this Shawasha nobleman, Nyamasoka, to whom foreigners were foreigners, whether they were white or black. Chambeni was instructed by Father Ketterer to impose a certain ruling on the people in his village, but this uncompromising aristocrat indicated that he took no orders from aliens. Thereupon Chambeni told the priest of the line taken by this awkward character. The Rev. Father Ketterer, one of the most liberal of the Jesuit Fathers who served at Chishawasha, decided to get the two people together at his office to talk the matter over in a friendly way. The meeting was heated and the tribesman, proud and stubborn as ever, turned to Chambeni and asked him,

'Do you consider yourself fit to be a chief over me?'

'Of course I do,' replied Chambeni, slightly disconcerted,

but nevertheless with self-confidence, especially as the priest was beside him.

Nyamasoka, now well into his sixties, was so angry at Chambeni's insolence that all he could say was: '*Phewtsek, demeti*—damn you,' and stormed out, leaving the priest and the chief speechless. *Phewtsek* is an Afrikaans word used to drive away dogs. His attitude was typical of that held by the VaShawasha people as a whole towards the members of this foreign-created black nobility.

However, if they mis-handled the question of the Christian chiefs, the German Fathers organized religious teaching in such a way that the Church did indeed become the centre of community life for all. They put a lot of colour and drama into their performance of the Mass and other Church ceremonies. This approach, appealed enormously to the Africans' sense of drama and the visual in religious worship. On feast days, of which there were many, most of the local residents from all parts of Chishawasha and Salisbury came and filled the church to capacity, often overflowing into the porch. Dressed in their finest clothes, they joined in all the hymn-singing and liturgical responses, which were accompanied either by the organ or a full brass band, thus making the service a most moving act of praise to *Mwari*. Before the consecration, there came a sermon by one of the Fathers, who dwelt at length on the sins of the world, the unimportance of earthly life and its material wealth in contrast to the sheer intoxicating glory of the world to come. Some of these priests were splendid characters, whose vision of heaven became more and more realistic and mesmerizing as they grew older. Old Father Hesse, for example, large, blond, and highly emotional, used to burst into tears at the end of his sermons in which he had stripped naked the wickedness of the world.

One really needed to be living in the Mission at this time to properly appreciate how far removed these priests were from the earthly problems of the VaShawasha, and their exploitation by the 'Christian' European community. As far as I can recall, the Fathers, even the English ones who took over subsequently, said nothing to suggest that they understood the implications of the Land Apportionment Act, discrimination and other problems. We were urged to live in a state of grace, to count material possessions as nothing because they were obstacles in

our path to heaven. And, of course, if you took this exhortation seriously, you had no cause to feel bitter against injustice, for by the very implication of this message your semi-slave status served as a sign that you would find it easier to go to heaven than the avaricious and rich white man. This was breathtaking impudence, particularly at this point when the settlers were clearly set on the policy of racial segregation.

The white Fathers tried for many years to keep the VaShawasha fully occupied and entertained. In the months of May and June, for instance, there were long religious processions, complete with band music, which covered the considerable distance from the church to the convent and back again to the church, ending up with the benediction service. There followed, as happened at Christmas, Easter and other feast days, a programme of musical entertainment by the band. Quite the most brilliant of these musicians, who later were to form the nucleus of the renowned Southern Rhodesian Police Band, was Emmanuel Murwira. He could play every instrument, including the organ, as well as compose. Then there was the best clown in all Chishawasha, Guido Chitengu, the drummer par excellence, who reduced everybody to fits of laughter with his extraordinary antics. On these carnival-like occasions, the band filled the air with rousing marches, while a team of young boys gyrated in front of the instrumentalists. The throngs of cheering spectators, scattered all over the extensive school grounds, were treated to large mugs of tea and thick slices of rich brown bread made out of locally produced wheat. Brother Lindner, generous and affable, saw to it that everybody was truly well fed. And by the time all this was over, the sun was nearly setting and everybody went home feeling fully entertained as well as fully identified with the Church and God.

Everything to do with the Church and, indeed, with some aspects of school life, was done with great style and fulfilled a definite social need in the immediate lives of the VaShawasha. For instance, whenever Monsignor Brown visited the Mission from his seat in Salisbury, flags were hoisted everywhere and we were given a holiday. Whenever one of the Pioneer priests or lay brothers died and they were buried at Chishawasha, it was again a ceremonial event, which drew Jesuit dignitaries from the city.

We had a kind of love-hate relationship with the missionaries, with the love outweighing the hate, which anyway was born out of political frustration and racial injustice and was therefore directed at the white community in general rather than at particular individuals. We recognized that both the Fathers and the Dominican nuns tried very hard to educate as well as entertain the VaShawasha so that their lives would be as useful and meaningful as possible, and they did this with extraordinary zeal and success. The criticism I make now is that their fear of speaking out against racial injustice led the Jesuit Fathers to keep the minds of my people off questions of human rights, and their future in Chishawasha itself. It was out of the egg of this fearful silence maintained by all liberal-minded and Christian people that the venomous serpent of the Rhodesian Front was to be born in December 1962.

From 1931, the school at Chishawasha took on an entirely new atmosphere, as a result of two new arrivals. Father Henry Quin and Father Francis Gits came to take over the whole running of the institution. The tough disciplinarian Father Schmitz was transferred to another Mission. And the headmistress, Sister Eleanora, was sent to another Dominican convent.

In no time at all, the old order at Chishawasha, with all its Prussian sternness and cult of hard manual work and prayers, was swept away, and in came a new academic atmosphere, which restored our pride and confidence in the emancipating values of classroom education.

Father Quin, a Canadian, unusually tall and elegant both in dress and manners, took charge of the general administration of the school. Anyone who saw him without his clerical gown and collar would have taken him for a member of the English landed gentry, dressed, as he often was, in tweeds, complete with a deer-stalker and his inevitable pipe. Liberal in the best sense of the word, he was completely free from the general priestly dogmatism of the past. Nor did he share the notion that all African customs were irreligious. But he had his obsessions.

The first and probably the strongest of these was his conviction that the VaShawasha drank more beer than was good for them. Accordingly, he launched a one-man crusade for total abstinence among us. But he knew better than to think that

this could be achieved by penal rules. His campaign was restricted to the pulpit and the temperance league, which he formed soon after he had taken stock of the prevailing drink problem, and encouraged as many people as possible to join it. A man with a remarkable gift for Chimanyika, a Shona dialect, which he had learned in the Umtali district, Quin attacked the habit of drinking with a zest all his own. In terms of sheer pulpit oratory, with arresting gestures, Quin gripped our attention and I would put him in the class of Billy Graham. And, indeed, he soon convinced many that abstemiousness in drinking the often highly intoxicating Shona *whawha* (beer) was a great virtue. Those who listened to his message were rewarded by being given a scapular cloth and medal as decorations to show that they had morally improved themselves.

He may well have been justified in deciding to embark on this kind of social reform. For, by this time, the people in Chishawasha, stripped of many of their tribal restraints and placed in a kind of hole into which white-controlled Rhodesia poured more despair than hope, had become addicted to the pleasure of parties, whose essential feature was beer. As they saw their hope of fulfilment within the framework of the European system receding, they turned to this kind of enjoyment for its own sake. To Quin this was a sign of moral depravity, which he decided to fight against in the best way he knew. Judging from this long distance in time, his success seemed to have been only marginal. All the same, he was deeply respected for his concern and for his efforts, especially because he appealed to reason and religious convictions, rather than to fear of sin and conflict with authority.

His other obsession was the love of his country, Canada. This was so strong in him that, as a geography master, he taught us more about this British Dominion than about any other country or continent. He made us commit to memory all its lakes, rivers, towns and cities, its national railways, products and islands. To him, or so it seemed, we were important enough to know about these facts and that sharpened our thirst for education.

Unhappily, in the end Father Quin was a bitterly disillusioned man. One day, after less than three years, he took his pipe, his walking stick and cap, and walked away on foot,

leaving Chishawasha for good. Someone had to follow by car to pick him up on his way to Salisbury. One of the most important vows a Jesuit has to take is that of obedience to his superiors. Father Quin must have felt very strongly about things for him to have left Chishawasha without, as it seemed, the order or sanction of the Society's Provincial in Salisbury. His reason for taking this, to us, unparalleled course of action was that my tribe were an impossible people to control and so he wished to have nothing further to do with us.

Thus, in spite of his apparent liberalism and intelligence, even he failed to appreciate the impact of European influence on the VaShawasha. Even he did not realize that a negative system bred negative attitudes in a people denied full justice and the scope to fulfil themselves adequately as human beings. As far as I can remember, my people had not conducted a studied campaign of disobedience against him or any other missionary. They were just growing a bit more assertive in their dealings with all white people as time went on. They drank as they liked; that is, those who did not accept his message to abjure their relished *whawha*. They put very little in the church plate. They lived or tried to live the kind of materialistic life which they not only copied from the white society, but which was also of their own choosing and suited their pockets.

I know from long experience that there have been, as there still are, a great many well-meaning white Rhodesians, including missionaries, guided by the sincere conviction that they were civilizing Africans. But many of these people, especially at this period, made the serious error of thinking that they should be repaid for their efforts with gratitude and servile obedience from their Africans. This is benign paternalism which in the long run is as counterproductive as the crude paternalism of the Rhodesian Front. Churchmen like Father Quin, sheltering in the unworldly fraternity of the Society of Jesus, missed the point that the education they gave and the conduct of Rhodesian white society as a whole were shaping a new people out of the Africans and that, sooner or later, these self-same Africans must think and act independently, rather than be dictated to by someone in authority, liberal or illiberal. This was precisely what the VaShawasha people were doing. Obviously Father Quin was not prepared for this and he was hurt, as other well-intentioned liberals in similar

situations were hurt, because they mistakenly thought that it was they, personally, who were being challenged and not the system with which they were identified.

However, while he worked at Chishawasha, Father Quin was a popular man, widely loved by the majority of both students and parents, whose reaction to the news of his unceremonious departure was one of shock and dismay. As a man he was warm and sympathetic, if sometimes inclined to be aloof.

As an administrator, we thought he was excellent. He cut down the power of the Christian chiefs severely and stopped them interfering with people's privacy. Perhaps his most important achievement was in giving the Church a modern look. He dispensed with some of the tediously long religious ceremonies. He reassured the VaShawasha that material wealth and Christianity, taken in their right context, were not uncomplementary. Previously, there had been in Chishawasha the kind of anti-capitalist attitude which is found in some modern African countries. Its effect was either to destroy individual initiative or to make those who were rich leave the Church on the grounds that they could not be both wealthy and good Christians.

A convert from the Anglican Church, Father Quin also toned down the feeling that the Protestants and heathens were outcasts in the sight of God. This may seem a trivial problem today. Not so then when all black people in Zimbabwe were being wantonly divided by all kinds of forces. Denominational differences, with their bigotry and hatred, were strong then and were adding confusion to an already confused people.

While they worked together, Quin and Gits complemented each other to the great advantage of the students at Chishawasha. Francis Gits was the headmaster of the school. He was English, but of Belgian extraction. He was shorter and thinner in stature than Quin, but his spare body hid a physical and mental dynamo such as we had not seen in a schoolmaster. To us he seemed to have the sort of academic accomplishments that few other people in Rhodesia could match. In fact, he turned out to be the living image of our romantic idea of the bold, thoroughly erudite Jesuits who once held sway at many a royal court in Europe, penetrated into such distant empires as that of Monomotapa in Central Africa and of Japan, as well

as blazed their trail to the New World long before the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Father Gits set no limit on our capacity to profit by what we were taught. He mirrored completely, at any rate to us, the best virtues of the English personality and English culture. He was thoroughly liberal, compassionate and one of us, with the added distinction that we looked upon him as a kind of paragon of all that was good and best in man. Therefore we were prepared to be like soft clay in his capable hands. But he treated us as if we knew our own minds and in this way some of us developed the kind of self-confidence that we had previously not been encouraged to have. We began to express ourselves much more positively and readily than we had done before his time.

Hurling himself into his responsibilities with an energy and enthusiasm all his own, Francis Gits introduced reforms which we thought were unique in African education in Southern Rhodesia. He abolished corporal punishment altogether, unless he sanctioned it, which, to my recollection, he never did. From that time on, some of our teachers would use the stick stealthily, but when they were found out, he treated their actions as serious crimes. His temper, when aroused, was something to remember for a long time. In due course, any form of corporal punishment and bullying became things of the past. But by far the most fruitful reforms that he made were those to do with the quality of our education. He lengthened the school hours, gave us the benefit of a realistic school syllabus, which included gymnastics, Shona, English, arithmetic, history, geography, music and a whole host of ancillary subjects. Manual work was reduced to the absolute minimum. He regarded football, athletics and other sports as essential aspects of our training.

Father Gits was a very versatile man. But, without question, music was his greatest achievement. Before he came to the Mission, the brass band, which Biehler had introduced and made famous in his day, had declined to such an extent that it only played on feast days. Gits revived it by making it one of our extra subjects, thus restoring this band to its former days of fame. I learned to play what was called the 'double-bass', as we called the tuba, and in that capacity went to Salisbury on several occasions when the band was invited to entertain

people at St George's College, at Campion House and other places. Many of Gits' pupils became the main strength of the Rhodesian Police Band. The priest was aware that Africans were on the whole a musical people and so gave music special emphasis as a school subject. Chishawasha then developed into something like a conservatoire, teeming with good musicians, who sang and played some of the best music, both church and secular.

Under the masterly hand of this man, Chishawasha became almost as famous as St George's College in Salisbury. Learning became an interesting and exciting experience for most of us. We were introduced to all the knowledge that our searching minds could absorb. Gone was the notion that good education was an exclusive preserve for white boys and girls. Gone was the impression that because we were black we had limited learning abilities. Quin and Gits were no doubt trying to show, as Richartz and Biehler had tried to show in the early days of Chishawasha, that Africans were not inferior to Europeans.

As it happened the arrival of Father Gits and Father Quin at my place of birth coincided with an educational renaissance among all Africans in the country. Because of the fame they brought to Chishawasha, the school soon attracted such a flood of boys and girls from far and near that its pupil content was multiplied several times over. They came from all parts of the country, such as Matabeleland, Manicaland, Fort Victoria and Salisbury. Many of these were sent by smaller mission stations and outschools, founded originally by those trained at Chishawasha in the past. Pupils from twelve to forty years of age streamed in, searching for a place to release them from their bondage of ignorance. Many had left their wives and children to fend for themselves at home so that they at least could spend a few years at Chishawasha and learn the mysteries of reading and writing. Many were ex-waiters, policemen, drivers and farm labourers, who had given up their jobs and placed themselves completely under school discipline because they felt that education would improve their chances in the white man's economic system. Most of these had never seen the door of a school before, but they were all determined to make up for lost time. Money, personal freedom and responsibilities took second place to the overriding passion to understand the secrets of the written word and to acquire the ability to speak English, the

language that opened the door not only to the world's knowledge, but also to the white man's baffling mind.

The situation brought with it many dramas at Chishawasha. To start with, there were not enough classrooms and teachers to cope with the number of applicants. Consequently, many a would-be pupil was turned away. In the somewhat chaotic state of affairs that ensued, some grown-up men were put in the beginners' class, with boys that were young enough to be their grandchildren. One gentleman had been pensioned off from the police force and came together with his grown-up son and cousin. He saw nothing undignified about sharing the hardships and the humiliations of school life with them. That he had lost the mental agility required of him to absorb the lessons he was taught was beside the point as far as he was concerned. He wanted to be an erudite man and he was prepared to pay the price, however dear, for this privilege. Francis Mubayiwa, which was his name, combined courage, determination and conviction that education would change any man into a special member of his society and he stuck to this resolution until his money had run out. But by that time he had acquired a smattering of the ability to read and write.

There were others like him. For instance, there was Patrick, who must have been approaching his fifties. He originally came from Portuguese East Africa, but he had spent most of his working life as a chef in Salisbury. Apparently, he was a good chef; he had worked in several well-known boarding-houses and hotels in Salisbury. By African standards he had been earning good money. If he had been a man with limited ambitions, Patrick would have stuck to his profession, which was not only reasonably well-paid, but also was full of glamour and variety, particularly in a town with a white population that lived sumptuously and, according to him, tipped well too. But in the kind of educational hysteria that was sweeping through the country, particularly in the Salisbury area, Patrick, in spite of his culinary accomplishments, which were in great demand, felt inadequate because he could not read cookery books nor write down his own recipes and menus. He also wished to master the English language, so that he could communicate fully with the white people who had liked his dishes. For him an educated man was freer and superior to one who was not.

Unfortunately, in his case especially, dreams were one thing

and reality quite another. His fast greying head proved to be like a wide-meshed sieve which held little of what they tried to teach him. The reader can imagine the reaction of the sharp young boys in the same class, any of whom could have been his grandchildren. Yet he carried on. Nothing discouraged him, as if education was the noblest thing in a man's life. No doubt it was to him, and it gave him satisfaction which, in the end, is all that matters to most of us.

If our teachers had any strong political views, they did not openly try to influence us one way or the other, but on the ordinary days of the week, the priest ended the Mass by asking us all to pray for Russia or 'Rusiya'. At first this daily obligation did not mean anything to me, especially because no one had taken the pains to explain why this strange distant country and its people had to be prayed for. But eventually it emerged that, in the eyes of the Church, Russia was guilty of a very special kind of wickedness for which she desperately required God's forgiveness. Slowly, the chilling facts about Bolshevism were revealed to us. We gathered that Russia was run by a ruthless clique, who, on taking over power in 1917, virtually enslaved everybody and had gone to the unfathomable length of imposing a godless dictatorship on all the Russians, complete with the authority to arrest, imprison and put to death anyone who believed in God. Russia's leaders had massacred not only the royal family and countless ordinary people, but also priests and nuns and, to complete their wickedness they had turned churches into stables.

To us, believers in the reality and omnipotence of God and in eternal life, the actions of Russia's ruling class sounded the ultimate in human satanism. At first it seemed impossible to imagine a situation in which a whole country, its government and people could exist without some kind of belief in *Mwari* and the life to come. It was just as difficult to understand how God, being the source of all creation, could permit men to sink so low and what is more to give them the power to manipulate millions of other people towards the attainment of their evil intentions.

I think this was my first real introduction to the sick state of the world outside Southern Rhodesia. For a time I felt deeply unhappy, as if I had a personal stake in the well-being of the Russian people. I hoped that God, in answer to our pleas,

would perform the required miracle and change the hearts of Russia's rulers or strike them dead.

Sooner or later I shared this disturbing information with my grandmother who was still very much the centre of our family. She was not shocked. If these Russians were white people, she observed, then all these things could be true, just as true as were the stealing of our country and the killing of our mediums, chiefs and countless Shona people by the white race in Rhodesia during the Rebellion. I had not anticipated that she would react in this way. But now that she had made this comment, which was backed up both by the facts of our history and by the glaring inequalities between black and white that I saw all around me, I changed my attitude and became less harsh in my judgement of the Russians. Of course, we were not told of the conditions which bred the violence of Communism in Soviet Russia, but Madzidza's remarks helped me to realize that there must be more than one side to the question. At this stage I started to doubt the efficacy of our daily prayers for the conversion of Russia.

Not many years were to pass before I recognized that Communism was a great blessing to the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia. Communism came to be used by them as an all-embracing excuse for denying Africans political, economic, social and other human rights. Communism explained why a black man questioned his position, why he complained about his meagre wages, inadequate accommodation and colour discrimination and why he toyed with the wicked principle of one man one vote. Communism was the one argument, when all others failed, which white Rhodesia could always produce as a pretext to resist any positive change that might make my country free for all its people.

I was later to witness this weapon being used by red-nosed farmers, pompous, dim-witted colonels and slick lawyers as an all-purpose drug which, delivered at the right time and in the proper dosage, left the bulk of the white electorate in the country with no capacity to recognize the humanity and legitimate claims of their fellow black citizens. But this was still in the future. At this time it did not occur to me that in the minds of our European rulers a belief was slowly building up that all black people were potential Communists. It did not dawn on me that to fight and struggle for one's place in the Rhodesian

sun was to appear to champion the cause of Marxism. If someone had told me then that white neurosis and selfishness would deteriorate so drastically in the future, I would not have believed him.

At the time, white civilization was synthesized into the individual personalities of people like Henry Quin and Francis Gits, and it seemed the most attractive system in the world. To think that these men and women, white though they might have been, could consciously be associated with the sort of anti-black conspiracy which finally emerged into reality in 1965 seemed inconceivable. When I was in the hands of these Fathers and the Dominican nuns at Chishawasha and in the isolation of the Mission station, I believed that in the long run, this alien civilization would win the heart of every African by the strength of its moral standards and not, as the Rhodesian Frontiersmen hope, by force.

While at Chishawasha and elsewhere, missionaries were preaching love, forgiveness and brotherhood to their Africans, the rest of white Rhodesia turned more fanatically to the preaching of race. From 1923 self-government was in white hands, and the undisputed supremacy of their race was the most compelling force in the settlers' minds. Under this Constitution Britain was still the ultimate protecting power of African interests and so had the right to veto any measure it considered discriminatory and detrimental to black people. But no sooner had these settlers been given the instruments of self-rule than they proceeded to govern according to their own tenets, not those of Westminster.

At the head of this government was Sir Charles Coghlan. He was a tough politician who, if he had worked hard to champion the cause of self-government for his community, he drove himself even harder in consolidating the gains that they had made. But he died in 1927.

Sir Charles was succeeded as Prime Minister by the then Minister of Mines, Mr Howard Moffat. He was a descendant of the famous Moffat missionary family, one of whom had talked Lobengula into signing the Rudd Concession and reassured Cecil Rhodes that the Ndebele king was finished. Thus his name was a household word among the settlers, and when he took office, they must have felt that their future was safe. The Government was ready to act on the Morris Carter Commission recommendations published in 1925, and so it was that the responsibility of taking the first step in the geographical segregation of the races in Southern Rhodesia fell on the shoulders of Howard Moffat.

The 1923 Constitution, if it had been honoured, could have led to an increasing share of power by the Africans. But it wasn't. As the Morris Carter Commission had recommended, the majority of the Europeans regarded the policy of racial

separation as essential. The only problem was how to bring it into force without affecting the way of life of the Europeans, whose economic prosperity depended on black labour. It was on this aspect that there arose various shades of white opinion. Moffat was certainly not among the rigid segregationists. By Rhodesian standards, especially of that period, he was a moderate or liberal. It would seem that he was a sincere believer in African advancement, who accepted the prospect of the black man attaining equality with the whites by gradual education and evolution. Indeed it is probably true to say that Moffat prevented white Rhodesia from embarking on a fully-fledged system of apartheid, which the extreme right-wingers at the time were advocating so passionately.

Then the most outspoken advocates of segregation were two men whom I was to meet and to know in the course of my journalistic profession. They were Neil Housman Wilson and Godfrey Martin Huggins, and both had overwhelming support from a white population that felt threatened by the black majority. Indeed, the more skilful Huggins was soon to replace Moffat as Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, an office he held for more than twenty years. Wilson, an Englishman from Norfolk, provided the philosophical basis for parallel development, as segregation came to be called, while Huggins, surgeon-politician and also an Englishman, from Kent, took the theory into practical party politics.

When he came to Rhodesia, Wilson went into the civil service and worked for many years in the Native Affairs Department. Any employee in this section comes into daily contact with what are called 'raw' Africans, most of whom live in the rural areas. His approach to Native Affairs is, in practical terms, very different from that of the idealistic missionary. An official of the Native Affairs Department is above all the vital link between black and white and his main concern is to ensure that the African mode of thinking and living is not out of step with white interests. And the average Native Commissioner exercises his unique authority as a duty without questioning the system. But N. H. Wilson was rare in the Rhodesian civil service. While enforcing the will of the Europeans on the Africans, he also considered the broader aspects of black-white relationships. In due course, he became convinced that something had to be done immediately to define the relative

positions of Africans and Europeans. And so, on leaving the Native Affairs' Department, he nailed his colours to the cause of racial segregation and remained to the end of his life its chief literary crusader.

He became a well-known journalist; it was in this role that I came to know Mr Wilson and to appreciate the strength, and therefore the dangerous implications of his beliefs.

Godfrey Martin Huggins went to Southern Rhodesia in 1911 on what he then thought would be a temporary medical assignment. But he liked the country and decided to settle there permanently. He was a surgeon and had a middle class background, and in a country where the majority of the tiny white population could boast few professional qualifications and little in terms of culture, Huggins found himself among the white Rhodesian aristocracy. In due course he took an active interest in the country's affairs. He made common cause with the Unionists who felt that Rhodesia's future would best be served by incorporation into South Africa. The Unionists' plan, however, did not appeal to the majority of the white electorate, who subsequently opted for self-government. Nevertheless, Huggins personally triumphed inasmuch as he was one of the first elected members of the Legislative Assembly. There he proved himself a man with a forceful personality, who was just as skilful a politician as he was a surgeon.

Like N. H. Wilson, Huggins gave a good deal of attention to the future relationship of the black and white races in Southern Rhodesia. He came to the same conclusions as those of the ex-civil servant journalist on this fundamental issue. By the time that Moffat succeeded Charles Coghlan, Huggins was firmly entrenched both in politics and in his race theories. As the twenties came to an end, he was accepted as the chief political representative and spokesman of the segregation movement in Southern Rhodesia. A clever tactician, and an ambitious man, Huggins forced the Government and the existing members of the Legislative Assembly to come into the open on the native question.

Before the death of Sir Charles Coghlan, white Rhodesians were generally undecided about a lot of things, except the race issue, on which they held the unshakable view that the Africans should remain perpetual dependants. They were appalled by miscegenation, a process that had well and truly begun, if in

the teeth of strong social sanctions. And to minimize this, if not to prevent it from happening altogether, they reasoned, the races should be kept apart.

But men like Wilson and Huggins saw in this rather vague approach veritable injustices and seeds for racial strife in the future. This thinking was probably reinforced by the phenomenal rise of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, the I.C.U., to give it its then popular name, an African organization started in 1929, whose voice was heard throughout the black townships of Salisbury, Bulawayo and other centres demanding justice and equality for all the people of Southern Rhodesia. Wilson and Huggins argued that it would be wrong, as well as immoral, to keep the black people as permanent inferiors. The only reasonable alternative was to divide up the country into geographical spheres of influence, where each race could develop on its own lines and at its own pace. Huggins was so convinced of the justice of this policy that he was to propose a motion in the Assembly urging the Moffat Government to legislate for racial separation once and for all, instead of leaving it to the future.

The Prime Minister, however, refused to go to these lengths. He argued that total segregation or parallel development, as demanded by Huggins, would never work. Moreover it would be an abuse of the power the Europeans now had to govern themselves. The Rhodesian Parliament would have had to overhaul the 1923 Constitution and remove the Africans from the common voters' roll altogether. The settlers would be breaking faith with the British, who had granted them self-government on the understanding that they would respect the constitutional rights of the African people. However he did feel that some form of segregation was desirable. He was in favour of dividing up the land, if only to ensure that the Africans, who did not have the necessary capital to compete with white men in the open land market, were protected and had some security.

It was on the basis of these arguments that the Hon. Howard Moffat presented a Bill in the Legislative Assembly in 1929, and thus became the father of the notorious Land Apportionment Act, which was endorsed by Britain and became effective in 1930. Although it did not completely satisfy his objectives, Huggins supported this legislation because it went some way

towards conceding to his line of thinking. When a few years later he succeeded Moffat in the Premiership, Huggins was to use the Land Apportionment Act with consummate skill and to give it the aura of an inviolate commandment in the politics of Southern Rhodesia. In many ways Ian Smith seems to have been an exact extension of the Huggins of this period.

What is important to emphasize is that the blueprint for the Land Apportionment Act was the report of the Morris Carter Commission five years earlier. Many Africans had given evidence to this commission and some of them had supported the arguments presented to them by the manipulators of the system who emphasized the need to set apart land exclusively for purchase and farming by black people. The unwary expression of opinion in favour of this arrangement by the Africans—some, not all of them—was unfortunate, and it has since been used to our detriment. Since then white politicians have always defended their policy of segregation by saying that the Land Apportionment Act was the result of the evidence given by Africans and Europeans to the Morris Carter Commission. In other words, we are asked to accept that the Africans of that bygone age actually asked for permanent segregation. Had they been better informed and known the true purpose of this Commission, I am convinced that my people would not have hesitated in giving as resounding a 'No' as their descendants did in 1972 to the Pearce Commission. What is remarkable in the whole sorry story of Rhodesian white politics is that they are only too ready to count African opinion when it is in line with their thinking. On the other hand, as we have witnessed more recently under the Rhodesian Front, when it comes to the question of giving black people an effective voice in the government of their country through universal franchise, then we are told that we are too backward to understand democracy and must leave this task and indeed our well-being, for the foreseeable future, to the white man. If we accept this latter argument as valid, then it is logical to say that the Africans of 1925 and 1929 were hardly in a position to understand the implications of segregation, let alone to commit their future descendants to the Land Apportionment Act.

All the same the Act came into being. Its immediate effect was to deprive countless Africans of their right to live in those

areas that were assigned for European occupation. These included people like the VaShawasha who lived on Mission stations. Those who felt this change most acutely and immediately were the few who had invested their hard-earned savings on land and building property in the towns. I knew such a man in Harare, the late Mr Raghajane, who said that he used to own a stand in the Kopje section of Salisbury. If it had been simply a question of moving out of the white business and residential areas and being provided with the alternative of a house or piece of land in an African township, the injustice would to such as Mr Raghajane not have been so great. But, under this law, there was nowhere else now, except in the newly created Native Purchase Areas, usually miles away from railways and good roads, where the African could buy land. Thus overnight, budding black capitalists were condemned to a life of grinding poverty ever after.

Of the many injustices committed in my country in the name of Western civilization this one is probably the most blatant and shameless. I know that in their comfortable ease, buttressed by the peculiar pattern of ethics they have set for themselves, these settlers could not begin to grasp the anguish and bitterness of men like Raghajane and the ordinary African tribesman who, after living in places which for countless generations had been considered ancestral lands, were suddenly dispossessed to make way for those with white skins.

One imagines that before the Land Apportionment Act came into existence, the Jesuit Fathers at Chishawasha would have been willing to restore this land to its lawful owners, had they been pressed to do so. Now it was no longer possible. Of course, the VaShawasha, in common with other Africans similarly affected, were not informed of the implications of this new measure. In their ignorance, many still clung to the assurances of the late Father Richartz, who had again and again told them that this was their land and that the Church existed entirely in order to serve them. Even some of those who followed the process of the Act through the white Legislative Assembly and understood its general intent, somehow felt that it could not affect Mission tenants. After all, these places were fulfilling a vital function in the building of the Rhodesian nation, a fact which was demonstrated by the esteem with which the Government treated all white clergy of the country

in those days. Thus some of the diabolical ramifications of the Land Apportionment Act remained generally unknown to and unappreciated by my people until the Rhodesian Front came to power and started to implement it more rigorously than the previous administrations did.

The Society of Jesus in Rhodesia must accept its fair share of the blame for this callous piece of trickery. The Society's leaders must have known what was likely to happen in the future. But they lacked the courage to tell the VaShawasha of what the Government had done. Regardless of whether or not these Africans were going to be upset, they should have been given the facts of the situation so that at least they knew where they stood, and if they wished to defend their rights, they could put the blame where it belonged. But as it was, this thriving community was left to die slowly in ignorance.

As far as the economic situation went, we needed nobody to remind us that the European system was not working particularly well from about the year 1928 on. The most significant evidence of this was the declining fortune of the gold-mining industry at Nyamapanda, otherwise Arcturus. We were still so near this place that we could not miss seeing the signs that this particular white enterprise was doomed. What had appeared before to be a prosperous industrial complex, booming and bustling with the movement of men and machinery, was slowly grinding to a halt as the twenties came to an end. What most of us in Chishawasha did not know was that the country was caught in the devastating grip of a world-wide economic depression. We noticed from about 1927 that the noise from the mines' stamping mills grew more and more muted. The traffic to and from Arcturus township was rapidly reduced to a trickle, while the railway line from the Ruwa Siding was closed and we saw men dismantling the rails and sleepers of the lines which had been built through our fields. It was a depressing sight.

Even more depressing, if not tragic, in human terms, was the lot of the hordes of foreign workers who used to frequent our part of Chishawasha at weekends in what had seemed the hey-day of this undertaking. They were put out of work in their hundreds and thus were forced to go elsewhere. The main route from Nyasaland and the northern part of Mozambique lay

through Chishawasha and these men continued to use it. There were those who travelled, barefoot and in long single files, from Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa to Salisbury and places beyond. There were those who took the opposite direction, back to their countries of origin. It was interesting to notice what Southern Rhodesia meant to these people. The ones coming in looked sadly poverty-stricken, in an extreme state of emaciation and wore clothes which were mostly just rags, precariously hanging and fluttering in tatters from their sweaty, near-skeletal bodies; while those going back home appeared, by comparison, well-fed and prosperous. In most cases, these nouveaux-riches demonstrated their affluence with such possessions as shining new bicycles, with many mirrors, heavily laden with goods they were taking to their countries of origin. For both these groups of people, the closure of this industry was a real disaster.

Understandably, the majority of the VaShawasha people were not in the least sorry that this crash had happened. For, in spite of the fringe benefits we had enjoyed from these mines, most of the people, especially the old and wise men and women of the tribe, had had grave misgivings about their social impact. As I described in my first book,* the influence of the workers from Nyamapanda had had some demoralizing effects on the Chishawasha Africans of that day. What is more, some people were aware of the real possibility that the gold reef under the Arcturus area extended into Chishawasha. Should that prove to be the case, they reasoned, our entire community would be sacrificed to economic considerations by white Rhodesia and we would thus be rendered even more insecure than we were already. That the missionaries shared these fears was proved to me, some years later, when the Rev. Father Ketterer was in charge of the Mission. In about 1935 a certain white prospector showed signs of being seriously interested in re-opening an old mine just behind a village north of the Mission in Chishawasha itself. He came again and again with his tools and African workers and carried on mining operations until his quest was proved fruitless. But during this period, several months, the priest was so concerned about the possible implications of this man's ambitions that he asked us to pray for Divine intervention which could frustrate them. This was the nearest open political

* *An Ill-Fated People.*

posture that I came across in Chishawasha from a Jesuit priest.

But to go back to the closing down of the mines at Nyamapanda, even the young people of Chishawasha shed no tears. Right from the very beginning of European rule, the Va-Shawasha, like all the other Shona people, had drawn a rigid line as to what kind of employment they were prepared to accept from a European employer. Sweating their guts out for grubby wages in mines was certainly not one of them and they had not changed their attitude up to now. While the mining industry was a going concern nearby, some of these men felt the nagging apprehension lest, should their immigrant fellowmen be in short supply or stop coming to Rhodesia altogether, they might be forced to fill the gap and do this kind of work themselves. So the adverse turn of events was like an answer to the prayers of everyone in Chishawasha.

To my grandmother and others of her school of thought, there was not much doubt that the ancestors took the credit for stopping these menacing economic schemes. They had always hoped that Nzwere and all the other powerful figures of the past would one day stir from their graves and put an end to such threats from the settlers. I even heard it rumoured that these mines had been kept going by the co-operation of certain misguided Africans who, annually, and at the request of the white mine owners, had held secret *Mashave* dances down the mines in order to appease the dead. But these 'traitors' had been found out and ordered to cease helping the oppressor. Once they did what they were told, the Arcturus mines slowly collapsed because the ancestors no longer revealed the gold in the rocks.

The situation that developed was a particularly serious one for the settlers. Large numbers of European workers were thrown out of work, and posed a serious problem for the Government. Something had to be done to ameliorate their lot. In these circumstances, it no longer mattered what kind of work a white man did and so, for the first time, they had to swallow their pride and take up the labouring jobs given them on public works, particularly on the roads. The alternative was to live on the dole, which was very meagre.

As always happens with ignorant white people, these men and their women became fiercely anti-black as a result of wounded pride. They intensely resented the indignity of having

to do work which was normally reserved for the black race. Especially deep was their humiliation arising from the fact that they were seen doing pick-and-shovel tasks by the Africans, who walked or rode their bicycles past them. As it was, the Africans did not have to starve or go on the dole. If they lost their jobs, they simply returned to their villages, where they grew their own food. Probably for the first time, the European workers understood that black people had a freedom which they themselves did not possess. The indigenous people seemed unaffected by the white man's financial system that had gone so crazily wrong and brought poverty, insecurity and bitterness to men who had always behaved like demi-gods. The Africans seemed indifferent to the sufferings of white working-class Rhodesia, and the effect was galling to these helpless Europeans as they watched their lot go from bad to worse. Their bitterness showed itself openly in the streets and on outlying roads. Those of them who knew our language swore at innocent black passers-by, using the most obscene terms in ChiZezuru.

Anyway, faced with these misfortunes, the working-class settlers demanded protection; economic depression intensified their fears and prejudices and generally strengthened the hands of men like Wilson and Huggins, who were fighting for a form of white supremacy, which could not easily be challenged by black people. The stage was now set up for white Rhodesia to make it as difficult as possible for the black person to climb even to the lowest rungs of Western civilization.

As the thirties began, the mood of the disenchanted among the settler population became harsher. Moffat, they discovered as time went on, did not seem to be quite the man for such a complex job. He was descended from a well-known missionary family and was of a liberal Christian conscience, which may partly explain why he proved to be too nice a man to handle a tough situation. Successful management depended on a more decisive Prime Minister and one who, above all else, could satisfy the racial prejudices of the white electorate. No sooner had he passed the Land Apportionment Act than Moffat appeared to these people to be losing his grip. The economic situation alone needed a quick solution. Political prophets of doom popped up like flying fish, while experts as well as

amateurs proffered all kinds of economic solutions. Radicals such as N. H. Wilson attacked the monopoly of the British South Africa Company, all of whose mineral rights had been recognized in the 1923 Constitution. These rights belonged to Southern Rhodesia, they clamoured. At the same time the Government could not balance the budget in a country that imported more than it exported. The position became so bad that Moffat decided in 1931 to cut down the salaries of civil servants, including those of the judges, which not only fostered the growth of political passions but also hastened the downfall of his administration.

One man understood this confusion, and proceeded to capture the settlers' belligerent mood and turn it to his advantage: Godfrey Martin Huggins. While Moffat was struggling to set the country to economic rights and to retain the power that was rapidly slipping from his hands, Huggins once again attacked his African policy. His message fell like sweet music on the ears of the Europeans. He plugged the line that native affairs should be a non-political party issue. This, he said, could be achieved by segregating the African and denying him the same political rights as the white man enjoyed in his own area. Apparently the Land Apportionment Act had not gone far enough for Huggins. In other words, he revived his original formula, namely complete apartheid, so that black and white had no reasons to rub shoulders in their respective spheres. To this end, he unleashed his final attack on Moffat in 1932, and broke with him altogether.

Huggins had timed it well. At a congress held in Gwelo in 1932, the surgeon-politician was elected leader of the so-called Reform Party and therefore of the official Opposition. The Reformers wasted no time in dealing with the question of mineral rights and successfully pressured Moffat's vacillating Government to deprive the British South Africa Company of its economic monopoly. In the end, Moffat agreed to pay the company the sum of £2,000,000 to acquire these rights. But some people in the Reform Party even decried this payment, saying that the company had no title to compensation. About thirty years later, President Kaunda took the same course of action and forced the British South Africa Company to give up the mineral rights it possessed in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. White Rhodesia, forgetting the example they had set

before, joined the ranks of Kaunda's critics, who accused him of an act of piracy.

Moffat could do nothing to appease the jingoism of white Rhodesia. His followers in the Rhodesian Party realized that he would be a liability in the impending election, and so they asked him to relinquish his leadership, which went to a man called George Mitchell. But the latter proved no match for the leader of the Reform Party. Huggins promised financial reforms, labour reforms and of course, most important of all, complete territorial segregation and the removal of the African from the voters' roll. The white settlers hailed this political star and made their feelings clear in the ensuing general election, which was truly acrimonious. The Reform Party captured sixteen seats, the Rhodesian Party nine and Labour five. Huggins was sworn in as Prime Minister on 6 September, 1933.

Whether or not Howard Moffat would in the end have carved a better future for us, had he continued in office for a while longer, is a matter for speculation. But under Huggins we were in for rough justice. He meant to abide by some of his election promises, especially in the field of African affairs, about which he seemed to have such clear-cut opinions.

Like all colonial settlers, white Rhodesians considered themselves more competent than the British Government to look after the welfare of the indigenous population. They had not welcomed Britain's insistence on having the right of vote on native affairs, and it was inevitable that, after gaining self-rule, they should challenge these reserved powers. The Land Apportionment Act had been a major victory for the settlers in this respect, for by sanctioning this legislation, the British Government had in effect tacitly agreed that the safeguards written into the 1923 Constitution, guaranteeing African rights against reactionary measures, were not that important: the white Parliament of Rhodesia could run the country as it wished, without interference from Whitehall. Britain had endorsed the right of the settlers to protect themselves racially, even by law. Now the decks were cleared.

As was demonstrated in Nazi Germany, once a Government declares, as a matter of national policy, that one race is superior to another and that the inferior race is a danger to the privileged, the results are tragically predictable. From now on the Rhodesian settlers saw their future mostly in terms of protection

against African competition—protection by their chosen representatives, elected Parliament, legal devices and other institutions. In effect it now meant that no serious contender for public office, municipal or national, could afford not to have acceptable views on the native question. Therefore, we, the indigenous, unenfranchised black majority, became the main bone of contention in white politics. That was the case in the 1933 election campaign and has been in every other since then to this decade.

Clearly this period was a turning-point in the worsening situation of my people in Rhodesia. Up to now it could be said that, in theory at any rate, there was equal opportunity for all, especially in the field of labour. Trained Africans, such as those who had been taught at Chishawasha and other mission stations, could compete with their fellow European craftsmen and expect to receive reasonable wages. No one had actively interfered with the right of the African to sell his labour to the highest bidder. But now the slump had shown how vulnerable the working-class European was. He began to demand such safeguards as would ensure for him both employment and high rates of pay. Once in office, the new Prime Minister proceeded to appease these people, and what is more, he was to do so with the unqualified support of the white trade-union leaders. They were and continued to be among the most vociferous champions of white supremacy.

In a country so underpopulated and underskilled, one would have thought that the wisest policy was to encourage the greatest measure of technical training for its people. But this kind of reasoning cut no ice with the Government, and least of all with the white trade union movement, which demanded as restrictive a form of legislation as possible.

In 1934, the Government drew up what was called the Industrial Conciliation Bill. In devising it, the Huggins Government went far beyond the worst fears of the African workers. The Bill excluded all Africans from the definition of the term 'employee' on the grounds that they were unfitted for trade unionism. More than that, the Government endorsed the principle that the country would depend on skilled white rather than black labour and therefore should provide a system of apprenticeship for white Rhodesians. To all this, the white Parliament nodded with approval.

Thus, by a stroke of the pen, Huggins and his administration put all black people in a position where they could not form legitimate trade unions, acquire industrial training or go out on strike to improve their lot. In other words, the state offered all black men for open exploitation by every class of employer in the country.

Certain aspects of the Bill sounded plausible and defensible. For instance, it instituted a wage-fixing machinery for various industries. Under this provision, special boards were empowered to lay down minimum rates of pay for all skilled workers—black and white alike. Failure to conform to these rates on the part of an employer in any urban area constituted a legal offence. But the immediate effect of this penal clause was to throw practically all skilled Africans out of employment. For, whereas in the past these people were cheaper to hire, European employers now preferred white artisans because it was their view that they would get better value for the wages they were forced to pay by law. Also, in order to render this legislation the more effective, the Government as well as the white trade unionists saw to it that no employer took on Africans where skilled Europeans were available. It was impressed upon all leaders of commerce and industry, as I remember only too well from the advertisement posters I used to see in Salisbury, that it was their patriotic duty to create more openings for white people. Indeed, in selling this legislation, Huggins declared to his compatriots that they should regard it as a charter for the European artisan.

Given such an illiberal climate of European opinion and given such a dedicated champion of white supremacy as Huggins was, the Bill went through the all-settler Parliament successfully. The next and final hurdle to jump was Westminster, without whose approval, as laid down in the existing Constitution, this shamelessly racial Bill could not become an Act. Despite African protests of the strongest possible kind, the British Government once more bowed to the will of these people by allowing this measure to be inscribed in their statute book. The settlers had won yet another victory in the struggle to govern without British interference.

The Industrial Conciliation Act, taken together with the Land Apportionment legislation, constituted the foundation stones of white supremacy in Rhodesia. Its implications

affected every aspect of African development and would make our progress, whether economic, social or political, extremely difficult. Apart from causing skilled Africans to be dismissed from their jobs and denying us the chance of industrial training, it immediately made the existing African trade unions illegal. Without a properly organized system of apprenticeship, black workers would not be able to qualify for better wages. Without the right to form legal trade unions and to strike, black people would not be able to bargain effectively with their employers. We had to pay for our education, and without decent wages African parents could not afford to educate their children. But perhaps more serious were the barriers this Act erected in our path to political power. The Southern Rhodesian electoral system specifically required an elector to have a certain amount of assured annual income, a certain level of education and some property. With the enactment of this law, hope of having an equitable economic share in the country became infinitely smaller for every African, man, woman and child. We were chained hand and foot.

Now white Rhodesians had two most important legal instruments to chart their course. All that remained was for successive Governments to manipulate these laws with skill and ensure that black people remained permanently in their place—under white domination. As we shall see, Huggins had such outstanding talents in manipulating white opinion that he managed to stay in power for over twenty years. And in that time he succeeded in achieving as effective a system of racial segregation as its counterpart in South Africa.

It was within this social, economic and political framework that I was to grow up to manhood. Economically circumscribed, politically proscribed and socially not tolerated by the ruling minority, it was a fearful prospect, in which any progress could only be achieved as a result of toughness and stubbornness, plus a certain measure of luck. My contemporaries who did not have these assets were crushed by the system and forced to join the millions of other anonymous black people, to whom an existence without discrimination and a life of freedom and dignity with reasonable guarantees of full education and other forms of self-expression were, as they still are, only abstract ideas.

Yet, I must add, few settlers were prepared to accept publicly

their responsibility for the position in which we found ourselves. Almost every kind of failure on the part of the African to qualify for recognition, for better wages, for the vote and even for higher education, was seized upon by these people as a sign of our lack of intelligence. Not even the hard-headed industrialists in need of a growing internal market, nor the white trade unionist, with all his doctrinaire support for just rates of pay, realized how seriously handicapped the black workers were, nor recognized the deadening effect such a system could only have, ultimately, on society as a whole.

6

From the Catholic Church's point of view, the beginning of the 1930s constituted a new chapter in its evangelization of the people of Zimbabwe. For the first time in its forty years of teaching and preaching in my country, the Vicariate of Salisbury, as the Jesuit Fathers now called their area of religious jurisdiction, made an all-out attempt to recruit local Africans into the Church, as priests, lay-brothers and nuns. Hitherto very little effort had been made in this respect and only a few girls and one young man in Chishawasha had responded. The first girl was Regina Magaisa, who had been brought up as an orphan at the Convent; she became a novice as early as 1927. She was soon joined by two or three others, including one Lucy Meyer, of mixed race, who had originally come from the Cape Province, and when I started school, these somewhat excessively pious women were teaching at the Convent.

The first and only Shawasha young man so far to attempt training for the priesthood was one Michael Shambare. His mother was a well-known *mhondoro* (lion medium) and therefore one whose opinions and wisdom in all tribal matters were considered special and sought after. Michael's father, long since dead, had also been a man of considerable standing in the tribal hierarchy of his day. With this sort of background, Michael Shambare's decision to enter the Church represented a big step forward for the missionaries in their endeavour to Christianize the VaShawasha people. But many tribesmen and women were shocked by his decision. It was hard for them to understand why a young man, so handsome, educated and so well-connected, should wish to give up women altogether for a life that was obviously unnatural and called for a supreme act of self-denial and discipline. To most of my people, men and women were not altogether human and completely fulfilled until they were married and begot children. As a matter of fact, many of them were not convinced that the white priests and

nuns in the Mission were entirely celibate. Because we ourselves had never had a celibate clergy in our culture, most people in the tribe believed that these missionaries led a life of deception. But when Michael Shambare declared himself a candidate for the priesthood and proved by his unblemished conduct that it was possible for him to have no relationship of this kind with women, tribal doubts in this matter were considerably allayed. The feeling remained, however, that it was somehow improper to forego marriage and children. This notion, plus the fact that the Church did not actively campaign for native vocations, accounted for the lack of enthusiasm among the VaShawasha and other Shona people to enter the Church.

But the situation changed about 1931. This was due particularly to Bishop Aston Chichester, who succeeded the somewhat unworldly and unconcerned Monsignor Brown in Salisbury. No sooner had this far-seeing man taken on his episcopate duties in Rhodesia, than we became aware of the Church's interest in attracting our people into training for religious life.

The training of the native clergy went ahead, and the response of the African people in Mashonaland was good. By the middle of the 1930s, there were scores of black men and women from all parts of Mashonaland undergoing the rigorous preparation for the priesthood as well as for the veil. The girls were particularly forthcoming. Although there is only one black bishop today, so much progress has been made in this respect that Rhodesia can boast the existence of a strong, well-trained, if somewhat handicapped, black religious community.

Largely because of the deep impression made upon me by men like Father Gits, I became one of the first five boys at Chishawasha to answer the call. Under the headmastership of Father Gits, my progress in the classroom was rapid, so much so that by the end of 1932, Chishawasha could not take me any further. As I wanted to be a priest as well as a teacher, it was decided that I should go to the Kutama Teacher Training and Technical School in the Zwimba Reserve. This institution was now run by a colleague of Father Gits, who had been trained with him at Heythrop and Stoneyhurst in England, before being sent out to Rhodesia in 1929. He was the Rev. Father Patrick Jerome O'Hea, without question one of the most outstanding champions of African education and medical

services in my country in the pre-war years. He was also one of the cleverest men of any race, colour or religious denomination to have stepped on Rhodesian soil.

It was to Kutama, more than fifty miles away on the north side of the Salisbury-Bulawayo railway line, that I went, aged fifteen, in January 1933. Accompanied by another Chishawasha boy, Canisius Muzenanhamo, also a candidate for the priesthood, I travelled in a mixed goods and passenger train that coughed and spluttered at a maximum speed of about twenty-five miles an hour. For both of us, it was a leap into stygian darkness as well as the longest journey of our lives so far. By this time Kutama's reputation as a centre of higher education for Africans who wished to enter the teaching profession had spread to all black Rhodesia. Thus, as the train carried us through the green, thickly-wooded countryside, I felt deeply proud and heroic in going on what seemed a unique academic expedition.

But when the train dropped us at the Kutama siding my heart sank into my bare feet. A more forsaken place than the eerie scene of that primeval *bundu* (bush) I had never seen or imagined. All around was an endless prospect of tall Savannah grass and wild trees, which reminded all of us strange boys from Chishawasha, Monte Cassino, St Triashill and other mission stations, that we were in a part of Southern Rhodesia where white civilization had hardly penetrated. Only the narrow, waterlogged and bumpy road reassured me that somewhere beyond this trail lay Kutama. This was at the height of the Rhodesian rainy season and in this part of the country it meant that roads were unusable by any wheeled traffic, except bicycles; and even these had to be pushed in places. Old-established Kutama students returning from their summer holidays told us newcomers that we were travelling through lion-infested country, where not only cattle but human beings were known to have been killed and devoured. There were ostriches, and they too could and did attack travellers, if they were provoked. Such tales only added to my sense of doom and despair.

Kutama was eight miles away, but walking through this uninviting terrain, where every clump of grass or trees seemed to hide a vicious leopard or a hungry man-eating lion, made the distance seem infinite. However, we finally reached the

school just as the sun was setting. And there again, consternation and despair assailed me. For, instead of finding a well-planned, neat and flourishing establishment, such as Chishawasha Mission was, the Kutama Teacher Training and Technical School turned out to be a collection of primitive buildings that had been put up in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. Many of these were grass-thatched and the plaster and paint on the walls were peeling off because of age and shoddy workmanship. The only impressive edifice was the Gothic-style church which dominated the scene. Otherwise the whole site and countryside lacked beauty and any sort of natural attraction. Added to this dispiriting general impression, huge swarms of mosquitoes flew everywhere, particularly over the nearby swampy gum-tree plantation and the river east of the school. They gave a whitish, misty look to the large area. As I was to learn soon after by bitter experience, most of these creatures were the notorious anopheles, whose female species were responsible for spreading the dreaded malaria fever. But for the vast quantities of liquid quinine we used to drink, many of us would have perished from this sickness, which was a daily hazard, especially during the rainy season. It took me quite a time to adapt myself to this environment and I did so mainly because the education Kutama provided could not be obtained anywhere else in the country's Catholic schools.

Kutama Mission was an offshoot of Chishawasha. It came into being at the start of the First World War. The men who founded it and built it almost from nothing were Father Loubière and a lay teacher and catechist named Joseph Dambaza. They had been specially chosen and sent out to Zwimba Reserve by Father Richartz, then still at Chishawasha and still an active pioneer in the spread of education and Christianity among the African people. It was called Kutama—'to migrate'—after the name of the local African chief, all of whose people became Christians.

Father Jean-Baptiste Loubière, a Frenchman, had previously been a missionary in Portuguese East Africa, so I was told. There, it was said, he had fallen deeply in love with a girl of mixed race, an experience that had caused emotional distress both to himself and to his fellow missionaries, particularly in those days when the Church and the Catholic laity as a whole were strict in their judgement of their priests. However, in the

end this problem was solved by his being transferred to the Zambezi Jesuit Missions in Southern Rhodesia. It seemed that for the rest of his life, Loubière tried to expiate this human failing.

Joseph Dambaza was the second son of Chikerema, one of the most renowned members of the VaShawasha nobility. At Chishawasha school, Joseph Dambaza had distinguished himself both by his intelligence and his zeal as an active supporter of the missionaries in their task to educate his people. Though fiercely independent and a proud man, his commitment to the cause of the Church was total and unequivocal. He so impressed Richartz and Loubière, who saw him as a natural leader of men, that they chose him for this assignment in the Zwimba Reserve.

Rhodesia has many fascinating examples which illustrate clearly that it is false to maintain that black and white cannot live and work together on equal terms, and that the African is not capable of sustained efforts, especially as a leader. The way Father Loubière, a white man, and Joseph Dambaza, an African, struggled together in equal partnership to build up Kutama, is one of them. Some people might suppose that Dambaza merely took orders from Loubière, but this is something that none of those who knew this African could believe. I am related to him, and have known Dambaza well over a very long period, and I can bear personal witness to his strong personality, which he has not lost even in his old age. The accounts I heard about him from the local people during my two years at Kutama confirmed that in many respects Joseph Dambaza was the more forceful of the extraordinary pair who controlled Kutama up to 1930. Indeed, when Father O'Hea, himself an even greater rebel, took charge of the place, he had to retire Dambaza, because their characters were too alike for them to be able to work smoothly together. In one of the verbal brushes that the two men had, Father O'Hea is reported to have been so annoyed with Dambaza as to have said, 'If I were not a Catholic and a priest, you would have been the first Negro I shot.' In a flash, the African replied, 'And if I were not a Catholic, you would have been the first white man and priest I shot.' Neither of them was a racist, but each, in his own way, had limited humility or patience, especially in the face of provocation.

It was at Kutama that Joseph Dambaza got married and brought up a family of five children. A stern father, he enforced the strictest discipline on his family, particularly on his eldest son, Robert Chikerema, who was to emerge not only as one of the founders of the Youth League in the 1950s, but also later as the Vice-President of the Zimbabwe African People's Union. My feeling is that had Joseph Dambaza been born later he too would have been marked (as his son has been marked) by white Rhodesia as the most wanted African nationalist today.

Anyway, when they reached Kutama, at the very edge of the Zwimba Reserve, Loubière left the educational needs entirely to Dambaza, while he himself concentrated on the religious life of the local Africans. Loubière was very much a man of his time, an extreme conservative, whose religious outlook bordered on monastic severity. Convinced that his duty was to send as many black souls to heaven as possible, he soon transformed his Africans into fanatical Christians. The spiritual atmosphere at Kutama vied with the spirit at Lourdes in France. He prevailed upon his flock to cultivate a special devotion to St Theresa of Lisieux, the Little Flower, and everyone did so, indeed to such an extent that the name of this French Saint almost replaced that of the Virgin Mary in their prayers.

Under Loubière's stern régime, all traces of African customs and tribal religion were wiped out, and Kutama Africans soon acquired the reputation of being the only people in Rhodesia whose piety bordered on monasticism. Loubière taught them to regard the whole world as a cesspool of evil and convinced them that it was their duty to pray for the redemption of the rest of mankind. And they did as they were told, even as they went about their household chores. Like the German missionaries among the Hereros and the Ovamboes in South West Africa, Loubière induced the African women of Kutama to wear long, flowing Victorian dresses, which covered the whole body, except feet, hands and the head. One of his irreligious faults, if one can call them that, was his fierce temper, people said. Anyone who had said or done something that annoyed Loubière, was called *mboga*, a mispronunciation of the Shona word *imbgwa* (dog). He also called Protestants and materialist white men *mboga*. The attitude of the Catholic Africans under him to their predominantly Methodist neighbours in the Zwimba Reserve was like that of Orangemen to the Catholics

in modern Ulster. Protestants were almost untouchable. Joseph Dambaza, naturally, also subscribed to this way of life, while he enforced an equally strict discipline in the school of which he was the ruler.

When Father Loubière died, Father O'Hea, who had joined him in 1930, was appointed superior of Kutama in January 1931. The new superior, whose outlook was thoroughly modern, had some difficulty in breaking the spell that Loubière had left on the local people. Nevertheless he soon succeeded in bringing Kutama and its inhabitants into the twentieth century.

O'Hea's erudition, confidence and pugnacity were exceptional. That he should have agreed to be sent out to an African country, run by a white minority with such closed minds, and spend the best part of his active life living and working in the African bush for the benefit of black people was something about which I never ceased to marvel at as long as I knew him. He stayed at Kutama from 1930 to 1940, during which time he almost worked himself to death, and he had to return to Europe because of ill-health. When I heard about his death in 1970, I felt a deep sense of personal loss, not only as one of his ex-pupils, but also because I knew that he was one of the very few white people in Rhodesia who sincerely tried to enrich the lives of the Africans.

Once this tall priest took charge of Kutama, change swept in. With a ruthless modern approach that marked his entire character, O'Hea brought all aspects of this school up to the required standards and turned it into a teacher training and technical institution. But because of the country's policy that discouraged technical training for the Africans, he had to abandon this part of his programme. He seems to have entered Southern Rhodesia with a spirit of rebellion, directed at raising the standards of education and health of the country's black population. He could argue his way round most things. Acting on the principle that politicians, civil servants and even the ecclesiastical hierarchy were endowed with little wit, he was openly aggressive when dealing with these types of people.

During my time he brought the new Prime Minister, Huggins, to see Kutama and the Chikambi village school nearby, hoping to convince him that money spent on African education was not a waste of the country's assets. Again during my time there, he brought the High Commissioner for Southern

Rhodesia in London, Mr O'Keefe, to the school to settle the matter of the land on which the Mission was built. The Governor of the country in the early thirties, Cecil Rodwell, was also prevailed upon by Father O'Hea to come and see what was being done in the field of teacher training. This visit, which happened before I came to Kutama, did not pass off too well. The priest took time and trouble to tell His Excellency about his plans to build a hospital to cater for the African population of this district, which was ten thousand square miles in size, but did not have even a clinic or medical dispensary. The representative of the King is reputed to have said, 'Why do you worry about a hospital. . . . After all, there are too many natives in the country already.' The priest did not tell us what his reply was to this visitor. However, he never forgave this man for his incredibly foolish remark, and repeated it to us time and again.

Despite lack of co-operation from the Government, O'Hea, through his family funds, did succeed in establishing his hospital, the proudest of his many achievements, long before the Rhodesian Government recognized its necessity and agreed to finance its running. This hospital became the biggest single centre of attraction to Africans in this enormous area, and the priest, who was a medical man in his own right, often worked literally day and night, often single-handed and exhausted, either in the hospital itself, or out in the remotest villages. Once Father Loubière and his religious discipline had gone, something of a moral decline had crept into the African society around Kutama. They took to drinking beer in alarming quantities, and violence and suicide increased among them. I remember a number of times that O'Hea just managed to save the life of a man or a woman who had been speared by somebody, or had cut their own throats and were on the point of death. And yet, in the midst of all this, he managed somehow to find time to carry out his duties as principal of the school as well as to teach, while maintaining his struggle with white Rhodesia over the many things he was trying to achieve for the Africans.

The Zwimba Reserve, which is part of the huge area often referred to as the Lomagundi District, is, even by modern

standards, a large piece of the country. The Zwimba Africans were among the leaders of the 1896 Rebellion and, of course, bore their share of the sufferings and bloodshed that ensued, but fortunately, unlike the VaShawasha, they were not robbed of their land to quite the same extent. Communications were bad, and the local people depended for their livelihood on subsistence farming. As the centres of employment were far away, most of the able-bodied men spent many months, even years, away from home. Life under these circumstances seemed to me, a visitor, depressingly static and backward. But it had its advantages for men like Father O'Hea who valued challenges. Undaunted by official indifference or hostility, by African lethargy or lack of adequate resources, he worked tirelessly and as time went by he had to be noticed and listened to by all concerned, including even the local white farmers and traders.

One of his great achievements was to establish friendly relations with people of other denominations. O'Hea made people realize that Christianity was a religion of love and co-operation instead of strife, as it had been in Loubière's time. In due course, the Zwimba Methodist circuit came under a remarkable African minister. He was the Rev. Rusike, who was made the principal of the Marshall Hartley Boarding School. Once these two met, they recognized their complementary role and provided together the sort of interdenominational leadership the local Africans had not known before. It was an important step forward, taken in the context of African advancement and co-operation generally.

But for his limited education, the Rev. Rusike was, in his own way, not much different from O'Hea. A small and unusually lean man, he was very self-confident and clearly showed that he had both the energy and the ability to cope with the heavy responsibilities which he carried as the principal of Marshall Hartley and superintendent of the village schools in his care. He was very articulate and, like Father O'Hea, a strong believer in education as the key to African emancipation. He battled on all fronts to improve the lot of his people, but he did so strictly within the bounds of the established white-led Church. He was not a politician in any way, but he was fully aware of the injustices in our system. Like most African conformists of his day, he felt that these would be eliminated through the power of education.

During the thirties and forties, the Rev. Rusike and the Rev. T. D. Samkange were probably the best-known African Methodist ministers, and made the remarkable achievement of becoming the first black principals of schools. Samkange, who was born in the Zwimba Reserve, became the head of the Pakame Boarding School circuit in Selukwe. These men, with several others of lesser standing, put the Methodist Church in the forefront of missionary liberalism. With its democratic approach and less exacting standards in the training of people for its ministry, the Methodist Church was not only breaking some of the unwritten rules of segregation by appointing Africans to responsible positions, but also was proving that they were no less capable than Europeans of taking part in the running of their educational and religious institutions.

The more I delve into the Rhodesian system, the more convinced I become that the greatest of the settlers' crimes is that of stifling the natural abilities of my people. Of the great numbers of people whom I was privileged to know, I have no doubt that, given the chance, some of them could have risen to really important positions. Among them unquestionably would have been Mr Matthew Zwimba. He was an entirely different type of person from that of, say, the Rev. Rusike and the Rev. Samkange. Born of the Chief Zwimba family, Matthew's fame or notoriety, as students of Rhodesian politics know, lay in his being the founder of the *Shiri Chena*, White Bird Church. Its headquarters was situated in those days at Chikaka, some forty miles away west of Kutama on the road to Sinoia.

At this stage I accepted the view that Matthew was mad, a view held by missionaries and Government officials, who had probably inspired it in the first place. The Africans admired him, but would not say so openly. But when later I had the privilege of meeting this extraordinary man, I understood why he was maligned by white Rhodesia. The remarkable thing about Matthew is that his father, Chigaga, was one of those chiefs who were imposed on the Shona people after the 1896 Rebellion. Thus as a young man he grew up in a household and an atmosphere in which loyalty to Europeans and their Government was something to be proud of, and it was natural

for Matthew and his brother Mishek to try and identify themselves as much as possible with Western civilization. The two brothers, like many of the people in this Reserve, became Methodists. After his education at a Methodist missionary school, he became a teacher and a lay preacher. His obvious intelligence and the force of his character made him one of the most trusted African teachers in his Church, and he soon demonstrated that the education of his people was his overriding concern. Knowledge was power and power was freedom, so Matthew believed. He started the first school in Zwimba Reserve, his Church backing him fully in this venture. His people felt grateful to this man, and Matthew Zwimba became the great hope of white and black in the Lomagundi District.

But, unlike many an African teacher, he put a much wider interpretation on Christianity. Insistent on playing an active personal role in freeing his people through Christianity from their own ignorance, this bold and inventive man made demands which did not appeal to the rulers of the land. Soon Zwimba found himself in a head-on clash with both the white missionaries and the Government.

The missionaries who had been watching Matthew's self-assertiveness with increasing fear, decided to discipline him. He was deprived of his natural base and sent to Gatooma. Matthew quickly saw that this was an act of sabotage. Gatooma was an alien land, a white town where he was always under white direction. There followed several disputes and conflicts. Finally Zwimba was expelled from teaching for insubordination. That was in 1907, a time when the majority of Africans throughout the country had no choice but to conform.

Leaving Gatooma an angry man and swearing vengeance, he returned to Zwimba Reserve. He was now convinced that the white missionaries were not only distorting Christianity, they were also in conspiracy with white rule and he was going to wage war against them as well. He became involved in a series of brushes with the police and the Native Affairs officials, by now sworn to tame this black man. These culminated in a criminal charge for which he was imprisoned. But imprisonment merely synthesized his beliefs and strengthened his resolve to fight the enemy on an entirely new basis.

In 1915 he decided to start his own Church and missionary organization. After first establishing himself at a place called

Kanyemba, which was not in Zwimba Reserve, though near it, he then moved back to Zwimba and threw out the Methodist-appointed teacher at his old school there, which he there and then proclaimed his headquarters. Thus his *Shiri Chena* Church was born.

He wrote a letter to the Reverend Mr Loveless, the local white superintendent of the Methodist schools, informing the white gentleman that he had founded this school and that he was going to commence his missionary work there. The (Holy) Spirit had commanded him not to leave his father's kraal, he said. 'Therefore let there be no quarrel among us two,' because he was not motivated by a feeling of jealousy. 'Remember what I said to the Native Commissioner that I want not to be under your commanding,' wrote Mr Zwimba to Loveless, whom we can hardly suppose to have been amused by this tone of communication. Matthew recalled the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of 'one of your ministers in Gatooma', who had dismissed him and so rendered him unable to preach. This action had caused him 'to be in weakness' and to fall 'into many temptations . . . I shall be glad to live in comfortable with you, and help one to another,' so ended Matthew's letter to Loveless.

To a Government official, whom he addressed as Temporary Resident, Salisbury, battling Zwimba wrote to say that he was forming the *Shiri Chena* Church in obedience to the directions of the Spirit of God which spoke to him in the year 1907. 'O hear me, thou Governor of this country, for all power, honour and favour are with thee. Be merciful and supply thy servant as you do for those missionaries come from over the sea. Let not my Lord and Master be surprised with what thy servant say. For such thing is not in the hand of man but in the hand of Him in the Most High.' We can understand why Zwimba in time earned the reputation of being mad!

The memories of the Rebellion and of mediums who had inspired it were still fresh in the minds of white Rhodesia. Zwimba's letter naturally was like a red rag to a bull. Moving swiftly into the Zwimba Reserve to investigate the activities of Matthew and Mishek, officials discovered evidence which, in the judgement of the Government, amounted to nothing less than sedition. The Zwimba brothers were inciting local Africans and were assuring their people that the foreigners would sooner

or later be driven out by Africans who would rule themselves once again.

The local Native Commissioner was authorized to take whatever action he thought fit in dealing with these rebels. In October 1915, he ordered Matthew not to preach or teach on his own account. African messengers of the Native Affairs Department were sent to tell every headman in the Reserve to see to it that the local people did not attend any of Matthew's religious services or academic lessons. It was the beginning of a lifelong struggle between Zwimba and the Government of Southern Rhodesia through its representatives in the district.

In a long letter to the Native Commissioner at Sinoia, Zwimba complained bitterly against his interference in the work of God that he was carrying out. How could he, a Christian, act in this way? But, of course, white Christians refused to see the hand of God in Matthew's undertaking. He was undermining white rule and they could not see any godly justification for such deeds. So the tussle went on. In due course, charges were brought against him and he was imprisoned. But each course of punitive action the Government took against him only served to strengthen his resolve; he saw himself as a martyr who was being persecuted for his righteousness.

As for most of his people, however, they were sufficiently cowed by the Native Commissioner and his police not to be seen attending his Church services or sending their children to his school. Thus, even in the thirties when I was at Kutama, the *Shiri Chena* Church was something of a white elephant, lacking both human and financial support. Yet at heart many Africans accepted this extraordinary man as a genuine and courageous, if tactless, leader, as was demonstrated when they appointed him to speak for the tribe before the Morris Carter Commission on the land question in 1925. But the younger, more sophisticated post-war politicians, who gave the Zimbabwe nationalist movement the ferment of universal appeal, openly sang his praises.

I never met Zwimba while I was at Kutama, but his shadow loomed large and I heard many a strange tale connected with him. Later, when, as a journalist in Salisbury, I met him in pursuit of an article, I found myself facing a tall, very dark man, with a long face and an impressive bearing, enhanced by a well-cut khaki suit. He also had a set of gold teeth.

I certainly detected no sign that he was 'mad'. He expounded his views at great length and with deep conviction. He had confidence and style and there was no bitterness in his tone. Indeed his discourse lacked passion, but he left me in no doubt as to where he stood in relation to the disinheritors of the black people.

Did he think we would regain this inheritance, I asked. Yes, of course, was his prompt answer. How could he unite the divided and degraded Africans and make them understand that the honour, the true value and freedom of Rhodesia depended on their physical and spiritual unity, as projected by his philosophy? Here Matthew had recourse to the authority of the Bible. The powers of evil would overreach themselves. The anger of the Almighty would see to it that this evil was destroyed. God would clear all the fog and smoke in the African minds, and they would seize their rightful destiny.

But Zwimba was not metaphysical all the time. He also emphasized that the ill-gotten position of the Europeans in the country carried the seeds of self-destruction. Not only would the system corrupt the Europeans, it must drive the Africans to despair. Out of the chaos of the resulting clash of these human forces would emerge a purified Zimbabwe and a free people, he said.

Africans are inherently a religious people. What remains to be seen is whether, under independence, they will, as Zwimba promised, be able to retain this character and develop it into a higher level of refinement. If the history of the Europeans is anything to go by, it is most likely that Christianity and religion in general will become of less and less importance to my people as and when their political independence gives them greater physical, mental and economic freedom, and, of course, more secular education. All the more reason to stress the role that religion has played in the past among my people in their adversity. Oppressed Africans, whether in colonial Africa or in America in the days of slavery, always turned to religion, which gave them some sense of compensation for their loss of freedom. When they had lost all hope of relief from their bondage, Christianity or their own religion gave them the prospect of a better future.

Matthew Zwimba must rank as one of the most original exponents of Christianity as an instrument for achieving black

liberation. He was utterly opposed to white rule in Southern Rhodesia. He chose to fight the system through an exclusively African Christian movement, founded and controlled by himself and based on Shona spiritual values. He was shrewd enough to know that religion was an essential part of the African personality and that through the manipulation of this inner force he would be able to achieve his objectives. He preached that the white bird represented the dove of the Holy Ghost as well as the traditional messenger of *Mwari*, God. His saints and martyrs were the men and women of the Zwimba area who were killed by the Europeans in the Mashonaland Rebellion. Being an ambitious man, he went further and claimed that God had chosen him to be the king of the people of Zwimba. Those who know the extent to which the majority of the Rhodesian Africans had been cowed from the end of the Rebellion even up to the thirties, will agree that it required superhuman strength of mind for any black man of that day to make these assertions. However, during my time at Kutama most rural Africans did not see that the *Shiri Chena* Church offered a strong enough shelter for them to take the risks involved in rallying around its leader. Thus, by and large, he remained a lonely man, a single voice crying in the wilderness of the Zwimba Reserve.

The Kutama Teacher Training and Technical School showed even more strongly than Chishawasha the intensity of thirst for education which now prevailed among the Africans. The students came from all parts of the country, and some from Bechuanaland, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, now Botswana, Zambia and Malawi. Had it not been for the limitation on funds, accommodation and teaching staff, this microcosm of tribes, languages and geographical origins would have been increased severalfold. Here was young Africa, full of hope and zeal, brought together under the umbrella of this institution, where we were all trying to gain a deeper insight into the white world, as well as break away from our own tribal chains.

It was here that I had a graphic glimpse into the daunting diversity of black Africa. Of course, we had certain basic similarities: our colour, our tribal patterns, our shared experience of being a subject race and our emotional attachment to the continent of Africa. But we could not communicate in one common African language. Our customs and cultures, when broken down to their various tribal segments, were widely at variance. Some boys had filed gaps in their front teeth, some had had these teeth removed altogether, while others bore scars signifying that they belonged to a certain tribe. At their homes and among their own people, these boys would no doubt have been proud of these mutilations, but at Kutama, which represented a gateway to a new world, these marks lost their tribal values and became a source of embarrassment and, inevitably, they felt a sense of shame and grudge against their families for disfiguring them in the name of a tribal heritage which was obviously out of place in contemporary Africa.

In a progressive academic institution, such as Kutama, where we were being trained to think rationally and question our environment, it was natural that these differences should be given serious thought and analysis. I reacted to them in the

following way. First of all, I took them as tragic reminders that Africa was more divided by its own past than by the process of colonialism. I became deeply disturbed by our conspicuous ethnic boundaries, which our ancestors had done little to eliminate. Secondly, I conceded that the white man, for all his faults and heavy-handedness in controlling Africa's destiny, was, for the moment at any rate, the only effective cementing agent, and the main dynamo providing the power that generated the fire of African consciousness and search for unity and progress. In other words, I admitted that he was a necessary evil inasmuch as he was the essential force to keep going the passion in us for progress. Thus, the deeper I went into the analysis of the ugly facts of our past and present, the more I tended to rationalize and to accept the view that colonial rule and its misfortunes were the prerequisites of an eventually united, free and industrious people, with the necessary wisdom and experience to endure hardships and so make Africa as great a continent as Europe. I told myself that, if the Europeans were at that point to fade from the African scene, the black people would be the losers. There would either be inter-tribal strife and bloodshed or once again time could stand still in Africa.

It was obvious that we needed, for instance, a language such as English, which was so highly developed that a man could express all his thoughts, abstract as well as concrete. We needed the European's systematic approach to knowledge, in order to communicate with one another and to rediscover our own lost past, to enrich our present and to build a better future for ourselves. We not only required the white man's scientific and technical achievement for the purpose of taming our own hostile environment, but also to emulate his sense of order, discipline and progress as guidelines for our own mental and physical development.

I was not alone in this view and this awareness had the effect of minimizing our revolutionary tendencies. But, far from falling victims to self-pity, or accepting our lot as being unalterable in our own time, these observations stimulated our academic efforts. We believed absolutely that we had the capacity to learn and thereby unchain ourselves from the shackles that bound us and so become individuals of the same value as any other of whatever race in the international community of man.

It was, admittedly, an oversimplification of the situation to

believe, as most Rhodesian Africans of that period did, that education alone was the panacea of all their ills. But at Kutama, this faith was given solid validity by our teachers, mostly from England, who themselves seemed to believe sincerely that Christianity and education offered the African people the smoothest and quickest road to their emancipation. These Jesuit Fathers were to us convincing specimens of what Christianity and deep learning could do for individual human beings. They had an almost tangible air of personal freedom. They possessed an intellectual and spiritual superiority which we admired and envied deeply. By their conduct and teaching, they made us all convinced that we too were entitled to the fruits of civilization and that if we applied ourselves sufficiently to our studies we could attain the same degree of refinement which they had reached.

Probably the most encouraging influence on our faith in the emancipating consequences of a Christian education was the testimony of the late Dr J. E. K. Aggrey, who was born in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. According to white opinion of the period, he was probably the most distinguished African of his day. Missionary-educated, he died in 1927 after an active and influential life in African affairs, particularly in education. His biography, *Aggrey of Africa*, by E. W. Smith, had come out in 1929. It was being read in almost every African school of the early 1930s in Southern Rhodesia. We at Kutama treated it like a thriller, for the very good reason that Dr Aggrey's message to his race was one of hope and certainty in the eventual attainment of our full liberation. Although in effect he preached the doctrine of turning the other cheek, he also urged us to be proud of our colour. He conceived the famous saying that in order to produce a harmonious tune a piano must have black and white notes, thus implying that the black man added his own distinct but necessary contribution to the world. He also used the metaphor that a tamed eagle would always remain an eagle and that one day it would fly. Black people were like tamed eagles and one day they would, through education and Christianity, rise out of their state of bondage, fly and soar to true freedom. Africa, he said, was like a question mark, and would surprise the world.

This philosophy, which really amounted to saying that the Africans should take a dignified but passive attitude of mind to

their lot for the time being, appealed to contemporary white liberal opinion, especially the missionary community. They passed it on as the guiding light for African students. It is not difficult to understand why Dr Aggrey's biography was considered a necessary acquisition in the African schools of that time.

What made Aggrey's message so convincing to us was not only his lofty conceptions, confidence and lack of bitterness, but also the fact that he was accepted and admired by a large body of influential white people in Africa, England and America, where he had graduated and lived for a great deal of his public life. When he was a member of the Phelps-Stokes Commission to survey education in Africa, the only black man on this body composed of British and American missionaries, he stopped in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, in 1925, and stayed at the Governor's house.

We did not then know the facts: a select group of white people in Africa, England and America, mostly missionaries and colonial governors, had got together to foster a common purpose, which amounted to directing African education in such a way that black people remained permanently under white rule. The man who was most active in this movement was a Welsh-American by the name of T. Jesse Jones, who established himself as the leading white expert on the Negro people in the United States. Under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, he spread his tentacles to Africa. His philosophy was basically that the education of Negroes and Africans should emphasize training in agriculture and simple technical skills, and not in academic knowledge. He was convinced that white rule and white supremacy both in Africa and America were unalterable; and therefore it was in the best interests of the black man to be prepared for the role that the white ruling class would allow him to play. Jesse Jones saw Aggrey as his ideal image of an educated black man, wrongly casting him, because of his lack of bitterness, as humble and grateful to the white people, his mentors. Hence Aggrey was taken all over Africa, especially Kenya, where he even disarmed the then Governor, who was strongly opposed to permitting educated Negroes into the Colony for fear that they might subvert his local black people. Obviously, Jones' theory on the way the black man should be educated found ready acceptance in colonial Africa and was

widely encouraged and experimented upon, especially in Kenya. President Jomo Kenyatta, when a young man, was a guinea pig for this experiment at the C. S. M. Kikuyu. As Johnstone Kamau, the names he was then known by, he subsequently refused to indenture himself to the carpentry course into which the authorities had ensnared him.

We had no access to material on such people as Marcus Garvey and Dr DuBois, who proclaimed the doctrine of Africa for the Africans. No book disseminating the idea of Pan-Africanism would have been permitted to enter into the library of an African school by the Southern Rhodesian Government. Thus ours were 'positive' influences. We felt then a real sense of pride in preparing ourselves for what was going to be an effective participation in this great African educational revolution. Indeed, as I look back on this period, I am convinced that ours was a unique kind of idealism. We sincerely believed that as teachers we would give our people the tools of education with which they could carve out a better future for themselves. We accepted that the world did not owe us a living; and that in order to squeeze from it our share of its assets, we had to prove by our own knowledge that we deserved recognition.

This simple rationalization of our position, while it lasted, gave us a sense of righteousness. We saw ourselves as belonging to a race of people chosen by destiny to play a special role in creation. Whereas the white people seemed to have everything the easy way, we had to struggle and sweat for the good things of life. Instead of becoming bitter and twisted psychologically, we turned it into a source of an especial pride and satisfaction, made all the more real by the sheer excitement that came with the ability to overcome some of the difficulties in our path as black people. Certainly, our circumstances made us tough, self-reliant and full of confidence in our inherent intelligence, superior mental energy and physical stamina. In this sense life was a truly fulfilling experience.

Few of us were to choose a career in teaching for its financial rewards. The standard salary for an African teacher who possessed the E.T.C. of Southern Rhodesia was 35 shillings per month and it remained so throughout the 1930s. The Government assigned the smallest amount of money to African education, and exercised the greatest measure of control. By the very nature of the system within which he existed the

African teacher was required to serve several masters: the Government which employed him, the missionaries under whom he worked and the African people, to whom he owed a higher duty, moral as well as natural.

To reconcile these conflicting loyalties was the hardest thing possible. Some managed to keep their jobs by just being 'yes-men', some won through by infinite patience, diplomacy and idealism, while others found the standards required of them too much of a burden to bear and opted out.

There was no organized African leadership at the time. The African teacher, either as a schoolmaster or a religious minister, was the only person to whom the general mass of the Africans could look for guidance. As a result, he enjoyed a unique prestige in black Rhodesia at that time. All the black people accepted him fully as their mentor in an often confusing and hostile world. Indeed, it would not be overstating the case to say that, until the fiery nationalist politician who had the quick mobility of the Land-Rover and the attention of the press arrived on the Rhodesian scene, the African teacher or minister was the universal sage and all-purpose leader of my people. His influence extended to all manner of Africans, whether in the remote villages of the bush, in the harsh, unwholesome mining compounds or the hurly-burly of the urban townships.

For me, however, at this point, in 1932 more important than training simply as a teacher was good progress in the training for the priesthood. When Canisius Muzenhamo and I reached Kutama we found eight other Africans among the student teachers who had similar aspirations. Seven of us were for the priesthood, while the other three intended to take the humbler role of lay brothers.

One of my closest friends and colleagues there was Leopold Takawira who also aspired to become a priest. He came from the Gokomere Mission in Fort Victoria, and we took to each other as soon as we met. We were to remain life-long friends.

Leopold Takawira was short, full of energy and possessed an intensity of emotions which seemed to gush out of him when he felt strongly about something. He developed an all-round interest in most things, lessons (although he found academic work hard), sports and people, for instance, which made him

a very human person. He also had the knack of making others feel cheerful and always we found him an attractive and amusing companion. He mostly saw the funny side of life, and when he laughed with all his heart and soul, as he frequently did, it was a real pleasure to hear him. Although he was forthright in his condemnation of racial injustice, he tried to see good in everyone, and when later he joined the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress and its successor, the National Democratic Party, he did an enormous amount of good by encouraging a spirit of reconciliation and unity among his divided people.

Already, in this early stage in his life, I could see that he had the makings of a leader. Certainly, as long as I knew him, he was totally free from the deviousness of mind so common in all kinds of politics. The training for the Church was thorough and exacting, and it is my conviction that it was largely responsible for making Leopold Takawira the fine leader of men he subsequently became.

At Kutama, we threw ourselves into the long, painstaking process of study, exhortation and prayer for the Church with real earnestness. There were many hardships, particularly the frequent attacks of malaria, which most of us survived thanks to the medical resources and skills of Father O'Hea. The standard remedy was liquid quinine, whose bitter taste and instant effects were almost as unpleasant as the fever itself. You made the sign of the cross first and took a fast swig of this wretched stuff. It rushed through your blood system and frequently knocked you into a state of senselessness. The body temperature rose from what seemed freezing point to raging tropical heat while your ears buzzed with strange noises. You sweated like a beast, so that your bed-clothes streamed with moisture. Several doses of this horrible medicine and several days of bed-confinement eventually saw the fever germs destroyed. But it took longer to recover your flesh and strength. We were liable to repeated attacks of this disease because the mosquito population was in the very air we breathed.

I completed my teacher training at the end of 1934, and returned to Chishawasha Mission where I taught for the whole of 1935. I found that during the two years I had been away, urbanization had taken its inevitable toll of the VaShawasha people. Oblivious to the intentions of the Government with re-

gard to their existence in this Mission, the lived a colourful, and to me a reckless-seeming life, with a continuous round of social parties, which did not seem to have any regard for what the future might have in store for these ill-fated people.

At the beginning of 1936 I left for the Seminary nearby, which Bishop Chichester had just started. Leopold Takawira and I were among the first seminarians there. Since then it has turned out all the existing members of the Catholic African clergy in the country. We saw it grow from nothing to a centre of learning that had importance in the otherwise negative environment of Southern Rhodesia.

The training there instilled in most of us self-discipline, a sense of duty, tolerance where human weaknesses were involved as well as concern for the spiritual well-being of our fellow men. But it had one grave disadvantage. It trained us as though we were in this world, but not of it. What mattered above all else was to help men to save their souls, and not necessarily to seek to reform the conditions under which they lived. Apart from the question of building schools and perhaps hospitals as well, the duties of a priest hardly touched the material needs of man. It was as if there was no direct connection between material man and spiritual man. So the priest was under no obligation to involve himself in the problems rising from living conditions among his people, such as deprivation of political, land, trade union and other rights. This became the basis of my disenchantment.

I gave a lot of thought to this problem during the three years that I was at the Seminary. The place was ideal for study as well as for contemplation. But because it was situated only twelve miles from Salisbury, we had ample opportunity to go to the city and there see for ourselves the effects of urbanization on African life. The town was growing by leaps and bounds and drawing hundreds and thousands of black people from their rural environment. Any practical Christian should have been appalled at what was happening to these men and women. They were being systematically herded into the sordid depths of the Harare Location, as it was then called, and other black areas, which existed purely for the convenience and profit of the white man. There their moral and physical fibre was rapidly undermined. Many of my people, unable to live on the meagre wages that they were paid, and embittered and twisted

by the persecution carried on by our rulers in the name of segregation, became thieves, liars and prostitutes. Bound by pass-laws and other forms of regimentation, they lost all respect for law and order which was necessary for the proper and full development of a civilized and Christian society. I realized that however many fine churches we built in a place like Harare, however eloquent the sermons a priest delivered from his pulpit and however often impressive religious services were held, this process of degeneration of my people would go on and become worse as time went on.

These problems were not encompassed in our curriculum at the Seminary. We were being brought up as an elite, an exclusively privileged group of boys. We did a sketchy study of social justice, as expounded by Pope Leo XIII in his famous encyclical *Rerum novarum* and kept alive by some English Catholic group at Oxford University, which issued learned discourses in the form of pamphlets on the subject from time to time. But it was no more than a casual academic reference, none of which had any relevance to the existing conditions in Rhodesia.

Under these circumstances, I felt increasingly that the Church in my country was living in the clouds, if not wholly on the side of the destroyers and plunderers of my people. And yet, at the same time, it was this priestly training, with its concern for the broad questions of moral justice, which aided my understanding of the deep contradictions between the functions for which I was being groomed, and the social order around me that was rapidly destroying the African people. At the end of 1938 I found this inner conflict too much to bear, and I gave up attempting to become a priest.

Leopold Takawira carried on for a few more years, and went out to teach at the Mission in Gokomere. This was meant to be part of his preparation for the Church, but while undergoing this experience he gave up his vocation. He then spent several years as a teacher in various places, including the Dadaya Mission, where he worked under Garfield Todd, who was to become Prime Minister until he was toppled.

With his irrepressible sense of justice, it was only a matter of time before Takawira was drawn into the Capricorn Africa Society, an organization founded by Colonel David Stirling, of war-time North African desert fame, who came to Rhodesia

after the war. Stirling was shocked by the dangerous false paradise he found there and started the Capricorn Africa Society, whose basic objective was to work for a society in which there was government by consent and sharing of economic and political power between the white and black people living in these countries—Rhodesia and other Central and East African countries. This made a lot of sense to Takawira and myself as well as to a number of other Africans. But, Stirling's ideas did not take root, because the majority of Europeans did not wish to face the truth. In the meantime, African nationalism gathered strength. Thus the next step for Leopold Takawira was to join the African Congress. It was an irrevocable step and he never looked back, even as he lay on his prison death-bed in Salisbury, where he died in 1970.

Bishop Chichester, the founder of the Seminary where I reached the crisis that led me to abandon the priesthood, was a massive man of impressive appearance. He spoke with a deep, resonant voice, and a clear, precise enunciation. As I remember him, he was short, partly bald and blond, with a round face, small chin and eyes which seemed to look perpetually sideways. His aristocratic background and his Englishness were reflected in his faultless manners and Victorian liberalism. Although he wielded almost complete authority in his Church and undoubtedly had great influence on our Rhodesian rulers, he was one of the meekest and most approachable members of the Society of Jesus I knew in the country. If he had room in his car, he would always give lifts to Africans on the road, however dirty and ragged they might have been. He insisted on living at the Seminary, rather than in the comfort of Salisbury, and when he visited mission stations he would go out of his way to meet Africans first rather than white people who seemed to think that they had first claim on his Lordship's attentions.

He loved teaching more than anything else. He taught us history, civics and Latin, in all of which he was a most able master, and we were enthralled, particularly by his florid English style.

Chichester's opposite number in the Anglican Church was the Right Reverend Bishop Paget, a tall, hook-nosed man and one of the most powerful personalities in the country in those

days. No two people could have been more unlike. Paget was a pugnacious man in regard to national affairs, especially politics. While Chichester kept his political opinions to himself, Paget let his come out in blistering public addresses, especially on questions of justice for the black people of Rhodesia. But Bishop Chichester said nothing in public that I can remember. The only pointer to his political opinions was his obvious lack of racial consciousness in his dealings with black people. I remember once an old African father threatened him with an axe, saying, 'You are taking away my daughter to make a nun of her. This is wicked . . . don't you realize that this can cause us to start another rebellion . . .?' Chichester was unruffled and simply said that the man's daughter had a right to choose what she wanted to be, a concept which was, of course, foreign to African tribal law and custom. Any other white man would probably have threatened the aggressive African with possible arrest for intending to commit violence. Chichester said no more than those few words.

My association with Bishop Chichester was a long one and I can fairly claim to be one of the few Africans qualified to say what kind of a man he was. I believe he was one of those people who genuinely believed in the superior virtues of the English race, and thought that by this superiority they would be capable of giving black people true freedom and human dignity. In his teaching he gave us the impression that British justice, British wisdom and British morals were unsurpassable.

Thus when I left the Seminary and was teaching at Chishawasha I was very much taken aback by what a young Swiss priest, by the name of Schoeneburg, told me about Bishop Chichester. Arriving in Rhodesia with a teaching diploma from the London School of Economics, Schoeneburg was simply appalled by the feudal system prevailing in the country which the Catholic Church seemed to condone. While he was getting some experience in mission work at Chishawasha, I came to know him and we found that our views on conditions in Rhodesia were identical. He told me what had happened at a conference of priests which he had attended in Salisbury of which the Bishop was the chairman. The Swiss priest had got up to express his views which, in substance, stated the obvious: that the Church was not on the side of the down-trodden, and was in possession of land which rightly belonged to the African

people. The Bishop slammed down this new recruit, saying that if these were the doctrines he was going to make public, he would have to be deported back whence he had come. As he told me about this incident, I could sense in him not only his deep disappointment, but also his despair at being regarded as an undesirable rebel by the Prince of the Church in Rhodesia.

Yet years later when I returned from my three-year stay in South Africa and called on Bishop Chichester, he said something which I thought was a clear reflection of what was going on in his mind at the time. It was in 1945. We were discussing a political point which, I think, I had prompted for by now I was one of the angriest of black people in Rhodesia. As was his habit, Bishop Chichester took a long, long pause, thinking carefully and deliberately before replying to the question I had asked him. 'I am sorry,' he said at last, 'that this Government continues to treat your people like children.'

I realized, with real joy, that this man, for whom I had all the finest feelings anyone could have for another human being, had at last grasped the meaning of the cross that we black Rhodesians were being made to carry in a country that hated Communism but practised all the methods of repression and autocracy associated with Communist régimes.

Early in 1946, soon after I had decided to risk the very uncertain profession of journalism, I had to travel by train to Gwelo from Salisbury. We Africans, who were in the vast majority, were restricted to the 'native' coaches. Because Africans have always been inveterate travellers, these coaches were always overcrowded, with all the wooden seats and standing room occupied by men, women, children, and their belongings, even chickens. But the few black people who had the means and pretensions to civilized standards travelled third-class.

Because of my education which had considerably 'Europeanized' me, I chose to travel in this class of coach. There were five other people with me in the same compartment. Soon after leaving the sleepy mining township of Que Que, I noticed one particular person in this group of strangers. I was struck by his dignified presence, his intelligent-looking face and his serenity. He did not look affluent, but his clothes were trim, his shoes well polished; nothing on him was out of place, so that I got the feeling that I was in the presence of a cultivated man.

I soon struck up a conversation with him. He introduced himself as Charles Mzingeli and he was going to attend a conference in Gwelo, whose main purpose was to settle the differences that had arisen in the ranks of the European members of the Rhodesian Labour movement over the admission of black people to the party. I realized at once that in this man I had made one of the most important contacts in my life.

Since my early days at Chishawasha, the name Charles Mzingeli had been well-known among well-informed men and women in the Mission. The things he was reported to have said and done and the sufferings he had undergone in championing the cause of African freedom had always stamped him in my mind as an extraordinary individual. We became friends and from that day on, I nailed my political colours to his.

There is no doubt that throughout the 1930s and the 1940s,

Charles Mzingeli epitomized in the minds of most people the African nationalist struggle. He had a breadth of vision and an all-embracing conception of black emancipation, which men like Zwimba and others did not have.

He was born in 1905 at the Embakwe Roman Catholic Mission in the Plumtree district, where he was baptized and later went to school. He grew up a conscientious Catholic, though, like me, he was brought up by his elders, especially his father, to distrust the white usurpers of our country and freedom. His education was limited, but Mzingeli made the most of his restricted opportunities. He learned to speak English fluently and to articulate his ideas with clarity and cogency. At the age of fourteen, he ran away from home, and worked for railwaymen, first in Bulawayo, then Livingstone and Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia. Inevitably, in all these jobs the colour bar affected him, and he decided to fight it without knowing exactly how he could do so. For a time he lived in what he described as intellectual bewilderment, where he saw things clearly when his fellow men seemed too stupid and ignorant to be roused into a common effort to ameliorate their position. But it was not long before he was introduced to the African labour organization called the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, which he promptly joined. He soon became one of its most zealous members, and noticed by its leaders. When they asked him to become a full-time officer in the new movement, Mzingeli did not hesitate. He loathed the white system and jumped at this chance to work for its destruction.

The rapid growth of mining and farming operations had brought with them working conditions which were unsatisfactory. Africans were being forced to find ways of protecting themselves. Some banded into religious movements, a few into political groups of a kind, but the vast majority found greater appeal in tribal societies and burial associations. But many of their leaders, though well-meaning, lacked understanding of the complex problems of the new society, and until well into the twenties, the working Africans were as disunited as the tribes from which they had come. The attempt to try and unite these workers into a non-tribal trade union movement was begun by the I.C.U.

Africans in my country had always been inspired and stimulated by the ideas against white repression evolved by the black

people south of the Limpopo. It was in South Africa that the I.C.U. was born, surprisingly at the initiative of a Nyasaland African, Clement Kadalie. Kadalie was probably the greatest black trade unionist and political exponent in twentieth-century Southern Africa. He left Nyasaland in search of better opportunities, and worked in Bulawayo, among other places, in 1916 and 1917, but his real goal was South Africa. When he arrived there, he formed the I.C.U. in 1919, which grew by leaps and bounds. In time it made the Government and the industrialists of South Africa quake in their boots, and so they set out to smash it. African tribalism was also a contributory factor to the death of the movement, but during its heyday its success, especially in places such as Johannesburg, was phenomenal. Naturally, the Rhodesian Government dreaded the possibility of its spreading and causing trouble in its own otherwise tame and peaceful black population.

That fear was soon to be justified. Many black people from Southern Rhodesia had gone to South Africa where they came under the spell of the I.C.U. and Kadalie's mesmerizing personality. When some of them returned home, it was logical that they should endeavour to spread the message of the I.C.U. Kadalie himself was deeply disturbed by the conditions he had seen in Southern Rhodesia. Thus when, in 1927, he received a cable from Southern Rhodesia asking him to sanction the formation of a local branch, he was delighted and responded by sending an organizer, Robert Sambo, who came to Bulawayo. The worst fears of the Rhodesian Government were confirmed. Sambo was subsequently arrested and deported back to South Africa, but this made no difference to the branch he had launched, because there were local men determined to keep it going. The most outstanding of these were S. Masotsha Ndlovu, who was appointed its General Secretary in 1929, Charles Mzingeli, who was made Organizing Secretary and sent to Salisbury in the same year, and Job Dumbutshena, who was given the responsibility of forming branches in the mining and other rural areas.

By this time, the I.C.U. in South Africa was declining, but the Rhodesian wing spread like veldt fire, especially in the big towns such as Bulawayo and Salisbury. Its leaders spurned the polite persuasion and servile pleading that were all too common among the educated 'elite' and religious ministers of this period.

This was a new breed of men, who reflected something of the spirit of Shona mediums, Kaguvi and Nehanda, and of the Paramount Chiefs and Indunas who had led the black rebellion in 1896. Fearlessly they attacked the Government, the entire white system and the Church. They also assailed, as no black person had done before, all forms of tribalism and those at the head of burial societies and other tribal groupings. Their essential message was a simple, straightforward one: Africans, let us close our ranks and smash the colour bar.

Neither the Africans nor the Government, nor the white population were used to this kind of approach. As Dr Richard Gray observes, 'Their (I.C.U. leaders') policy of appeal to the masses—large posters in the streets of Bulawayo (and later Salisbury) announcing their existence, militant speeches to crowded public meetings—was an intoxicating innovation in Southern Rhodesia.'* Not since the end of the 1896 Rebellion had the black people in my country seen men of their own race of such calibre and fearlessness.

Arriving in Salisbury in November 1929, Charles Mzingeli made an immediate impact. The meetings he organized and doctrines he propounded drew large audiences. The men and women who heard his words hailed and cheered, as if a saviour had appeared in their midst. He called the white man a thief, a liar, a blood-thirsty vampire, if not a Satan in flesh. European Special Branch men came, but sat impassively, without a word of protest. (When you realize that in the 1960s the Rhodesian police used to come to African political gatherings with tanks and machine guns which they pointed at the speakers to deter them from making inflammatory speeches, you must concede that the Government of Moffat, which only sent notebook-holding detectives, was a great deal more civilized.)

One of the most daring actions taken by Charles Mzingeli against the Rhodesian establishment was the attack he made on the Native Commissioner of Mrewa. Some Africans under Chief Mangwende complained to Mzingeli that their Commissioner was confiscating their hides. Mzingeli investigated these charges, found them to be true and made the racket public. Action was taken, and the exploitation came to an end. News of this spread all over the country. If the Africans of

* Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, 1960 (page 165).

Salisbury and its environs had had any doubts about Mzingeli's courage and the effectiveness of the I.C.U. in championing their cause, they now had none whatsoever. They flocked to the I.C.U. banner in even bigger numbers.

If Mzingeli, Ndlovu and Dumbutshena had been aliens, the simple answer for the Government would have been to deport them. But they were not. The Government had to devise other means, such as harassment and attempts to discredit them.

For example, at the end of 1929 and over the Christmas holidays, fighting broke out in Bulawayo, mainly between the Shona and the Ndebele. These were serious clashes, coming particularly as they did at a time when the I.C.U. was preaching African unity and increasing its following. Many charged that they had been deliberately engineered by the authorities for the express purpose of discrediting the I.C.U. and rendering its efforts to unite the two tribes more difficult. Anyone who has lived in this land and is acquainted with the methods employed by white Governments will not dismiss this accusation as groundless. These people often plant *agents provocateurs*, who are paid to create violent situations, including throwing petrol bombs into houses in the African townships. Thereafter the white propaganda machine declares what terrible men the black nationalists are, who beat up and burn their own people. Then at the appropriate time, the security forces are moved into these townships to prove to the black population that they can be protected by the Government. In the meantime the nationalist movement is banned and so-called trouble-makers are arrested and whisked away. Everybody is happy and convinced that the Government knows its duty, and all would be well if only power-hungry black nationalists did not exist. In the 1960s a white member of the ruling U.F.P. was actually caught, disguised, near a house in the African township of Highfield. He was trying to throw a bomb at the house of Aidan Mwamuka, a businessman against whom there was strong feeling from his fellow men who suspected him of having leanings towards the Rhodesian Front, who were then looking for black candidates to give them an image of respectability. Jubilant, the people who apprehended the would-be bomb-thrower told the appropriate authorities, but no action was taken against him, for publicity through the courts or newspapers would have given the game away.

In 1929, however, the Bulawayo tribal riots were quelled, and the I.C.U. survived. Mzingeli, Ndlovu and Dumbutshena and all their followers were determined to fight on for economic and political justice. White Rhodesia was evidently convinced that their duty was to destroy this 'subversive' black trade union movement, but their actions were not entirely negative. Judging that the main reason why such large crowds of Africans were drawn to the weekend meetings of the I.C.U. was boredom, the Government hit upon the idea of improving sporting and other amenities in the black townships. Despite its segregation policy, the Government also realized how necessary it was to provide Africans with a forum for the expression of their views on local matters instead of having to do so through the I.C.U. and its leaders.

These responsibilities were entrusted to new Native Welfare Societies. It was an ingenious scheme and in a social sense it was constructive while it lasted. In each centre, a branch of the native welfare movement came into being with the encouragement and backing of the central and local governments. Into these bodies came local white experts on African affairs, government and municipal council officials and missionary representatives, whose primary objective was to impress on the black people that the Europeans had their welfare at heart and that they offered a useful channel for expressing their grievances and, where possible, for getting them redressed. Even Bishops Chichester and Paget were members of the Salisbury branch. It was hoped that in this way the I.C.U. would be rendered ineffective when the mass of the black people came to realize that the Government and the town councils only listened to views put to them through the approved welfare societies.

These bodies set out to provide much-needed amenities, such as bigger and better beer halls, improved football pitches and tennis courts, racing tracks and boxing rings. Some of the most impressive public occasions in Harare from about 1933 on to 1945 were the sporting meetings held by this organization. These were staged with efficiency and, of course, drew wide support from Africans as well as from white official and ecclesiastical Salisbury, who spent many a hot afternoon cheering black sportsmen and at the end of the day presenting them with lavish prizes. I went to some of these as a member of the Chishawasha Mission band, which was invited to provide

musical entertainment. Like many of the Africans in the huge crowds of mixed races who turned up, I was not aware of the political intention behind these events, so conspicuously and enthusiastically supported by those in power. I enjoyed them enormously, and they were constructive inasmuch as they developed African sporting talent to a very high degree.

Just as the Government had foreseen, the general effect of these organized activities was to make the public meetings of the I.C.U. less attractive, except to the most politically-minded. But Mzingeli and his fellow trade unionists realized from the very beginning that the Native Welfare Societies were intended to undermine their work. He joined the Salisbury branch of this Government-backed organization and made certain that he was elected to attend many of its high-level meetings. I asked him why he had taken this compromising stand. He replied that he wished to ensure that when these societies made representations to the authorities, they did not distort the view of the African people. In other words, he felt that the European members would try to outwit the African representatives into accepting policies which were against their interests.

From what I learned later about the nature of this semi-official welfare movement, I have to admit that Mzingeli's interpretation was correct. The Rhodesian Government did everything it could to strengthen the influence of the native welfare societies in each urban area. Later they were coordinated into what was called the Federation of Native Welfare Societies, under the Rev. Percy Ibbotson, a Methodist minister. He was very close to the Prime Minister, an accomplished political manipulator, and soon showed himself to be the Government's chief watch-dog in African affairs. In this role he tried hard to distract black people from their nationalist aspirations. Naturally, Mzingeli and other educated Africans mistrusted him; they watched every move he made and strongly opposed some of his more overt political manoeuvrings through the forum of the native welfare movement.

There is no doubt that the militancy of the I.C.U. strengthened the hand of the Huggins' administration in pursuing its philosophy of parallel development. It alarmed white workers and their trade union leaders, who did not wish to see black men undermine their positions, and it presented Huggins with a ready-made excuse for excluding African workers from the

definition of 'employees' and putting them outside the benefits of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934. Mzingeli and his colleagues put up a vigorous fight against this measure all the way through, but after the enactment of this legislation they were helpless. The I.C.U. was rendered ineffectual.

However, this measure did not stop the leaders of the I.C.U. continuing their efforts in keeping the movement alive. The Government could, of course, have declared it an unlawful organization. It did not do this; it simply denied it official recognition, so the I.C.U. could not negotiate or make agreements on behalf of its members with the people who employed them. Naturally, in this situation African workers were unlikely to feel that they had anything to gain from membership of the I.C.U. At the same time the Government and white employers generally mounted a campaign to dissuade black workers from supporting the I.C.U. Those who did not heed this warning lost their jobs. In due course the union was reduced to a mere shadow of its original strength. By the year 1936, it had ceased to exist altogether.

Strictly speaking the I.C.U. was more of a political rather than a trade union body. Its constitution gave it the status of a general union, so that anybody, skilled or unskilled, working or not, and living in the town or the country, qualified to be a member. This made the scope of its responsibilities much too wide for it to achieve practical results. Nowhere, either in Salisbury or Bulawayo, was the I.C.U. able to concentrate on a specific group of workers, and call a strike. The leaders mainly dealt with the general economic and political grievances of the black proletariat, in order to make it conscious of its rights. But the approach proved to be impractical.

Probably the biggest handicap of all was that the Africans of Southern Rhodesia were not industrialized. The vast majority maintained their rural ties and tribal allegiances. They were not yet suffering from the insecurity which had forced workers in Europe to seek the protection of active trade unions. Even foreign Africans felt psychologically secure under the shelter of their tribal and burial associations. More than that, the supply of black workers was far in excess of the jobs available, so that no group of workers was in any position to hold an employer to ransom, either by a strike or a go-slow. Under these circumstances, intimidation from employers proved to be much

stronger than the I.C.U.'s message of African solidarity towards a distant goal of economic, social and political freedom. The time was not yet ripe for trade unionism. But the African people were certainly made aware of their potential strength as an organized group. They also forced the Government to realize that the black worker was a potential source of trouble.

In this respect the I.C.U. was one of the most significant developments in the political consciousness of the Rhodesian Africans. The movement laid the foundations for the more clearly defined nationalist struggle that was to follow. When the African Youth League, the Congress and others came into being much later on, they used the old I.C.U. tactics from the early 1930s – mass meetings, bold slogans and harsh denunciation of the white establishment.

Thus Mzingeli, Masotsha Ndlovu and Job Dumbutshena stand out as key figures in laying the foundation of modern African nationalism in Zimbabwe. In the early 1930s majority rule was a concept that neither the Africans nor the settlers entertained as a remote possibility. White Rhodesians were a law unto themselves in all essential matters affecting their internal interests, and despite so-called constitutional safeguards, they did not have to account for their actions to any outside power, except Britain, whose support they could generally count on. The bulk of the African people were prepared to submit to white rule; it seemed so entrenched at that point that few could doubt it as a fixed element of the natural order of creation. It required, therefore, extraordinary genius, vision and pluck to challenge this kind of social order. The I.C.U. was a militant organization embracing all the characteristics of a truly nationalist movement, transcending tribal differences, and supplanting them with the concept of a common African crusade against white economic, political and racial supremacy. This approach was new, and unique.

Today, however, Mzingeli has been forgotten. When I first met and worked with him in the late forties, he seemed too much a part of the national political setting for anyone to imagine that events might out-pace him. The question now is: Why did this man phase out of the cause in which he believed so deeply?

There is no doubt that Mzingeli was a victim of one of the longest official vendettas against any individual African in

pre-1939 Rhodesia. He was always kept under regular surveillance by the powers of the land. The Criminal Investigation Department reported on his movements, and often he would notice a detective lurking near his home or trailing him as he went about his private business. Those who were seen enjoying more than a casual acquaintance with Mzingeli were liable to be interrogated by the police, who wished to know what he was saying and why he was interested in them. The impression was created generally by the authorities that Mzingeli was a 'dangerous' man and that law-abiding black people should avoid him as much as possible.

At first he was intensely annoyed by this official harassment, but eventually he learned to live with it. Naturally, it changed his outlook. It certainly made him scrupulously careful. When I came to know him, he was probably the most law-abiding man in the city. While the rest of us took special pleasure in breaking the laws designed to control our movements, he obeyed them as though he were a policeman himself, for he realized that any carelessness on his part in such matters would make him vulnerable to police action.

Brought up a Catholic, at first he believed sincerely that what the I.C.U. was trying to do for his people was in conformity with the Church teaching. He was convinced that his was the role of a practical Christian, more or less doing what Christ would have done had he lived in Rhodesia, or any other country where the rulers deliberately carried out a policy of oppression. But he was to be disillusioned. Some white Catholic missionaries were quick to see the movement and its leaders as enemies of Christianity, and in Bulawayo, especially, some priests openly preached against the union and threatened its members with excommunication. Such clerical intimidation forced many intelligent and public-spirited Africans to shun the movement.

At that time, St Peter's, the Catholic African Mission at the edge of the Harare Location of Salisbury, was run by the Reverend Father Burbridge, S.J. Like other missionaries, Burbridge subscribed to the philosophy of white leadership for the black people, but he had the rare distinction of being himself no respecter of persons or, frequently, of Governments. His fiery temper and caustic tongue were held in awe by a great many black and white people in Salisbury. He used to

walk into police stations and order the immediate release of Africans he knew who were in trouble over minor breaches of the country's legal system, and he defended anyone he thought was a victim of white bureaucracy and racial discrimination in Salisbury. In turn, the black people revered him for being a highly effective and compassionate social worker for their race in the whole city. He could not care less what the Rhodesian authorities thought or did about his unconventional methods; but just as he had no patience with blundering officials, he had none either for any African who did not give him instant obedience.

When the Rhodesian Government realized that it was going to be very difficult to intimidate Mzingeli, it turned to Father Burbridge and asked him to exercise his priestly influence on him. In due course he was invited by the priest for a special interview. Mzingeli was only too glad to accept the invitation, for he had always wanted an opportunity of enlightening the priest on the true objectives of his much misunderstood organization.

But when the two men came face to face, Mzingeli was given no such opportunity. Burbridge asked for the constitution of the I.C.U. He read it through, knitting his brow and shaking his goatee beard again and again. He boldly stated that the constitution of the I.C.U. reeked with Communist ideas, unworthy of a good and intelligent Catholic such as Mzingeli seemed to be. However, he went on, this could be put right if Mzingeli agreed to change certain of its sections and inserted in the constitution a new clause, stating that the I.C.U. was a Catholic trade union, subject to the direction and control of the Catholic Church.

There could only be one answer from Charles and it was unequivocal: he would give no Church or priest the executive right to control his union. Not even the Holy Father the Pope could persuade him to alter one word in this constitution. Burbridge lost his temper and told Mzingeli that from now on he could consider himself to have been excommunicated from the Church. The African leader was shattered by such intolerance from a man whose concern with the lot of the black people he had admired. He left St Peter's in the knowledge that a state of war existed between them.

Mzingeli said this made him realize how naïve he had been in believing all along that the Church was for universal justice. He was now more determined than ever to undermine this

so-called Christian society. He never went to church again, although I understood from him that the priest in charge of St Peter's in the 1950s and 1960s, Henry Swift, tried hard to get him back into the ecclesiastical fold. Mzingeli had allowed the Christian religion to be the main influence in his personal life. Now it was meaningless, except in so far as he still believed in the concept of God and that of right and wrong. What he knew of Communism at that stage suggested that this ideology had been born of repression and injustice by the Christian rich against the poor and ignorant. He saw exactly the same situation in Rhodesia. He decided therefore to investigate Communism. There was no evidence that it was inimical to African interests. He developed a keen interest in Karl Marx's teaching and decided to adopt those aspects of socialism which had practical relevance to the conditions of his people. 'I realized,' he told me, 'that if Christ came to Rhodesia, not only would he be denounced by the Church, but he would also be branded a Bolshevik and, if his colour was black, he would be forced to live in the black ghetto of Harare.' As years went by Mzingeli established contacts, through correspondence, with trade union leaders in many parts of the world, including avowed Communists. His office was raided by the Special Branch, following on the 1948 general strike of Africans in the country, and yielded a staggering volume of documents and letters. Huggins, the Prime Minister, remarked in the Rhodesian Parliament that he was astonished by this African leader's international connections. By this stage, Mzingeli's attitude was quite clear: if the only way the Africans could achieve their freedom was to make a pact with the devil, he would gladly attach his signature to this alliance.

For several years after the demise of the I.C.U., Charles Mzingeli lived in a state of bitter and empty loneliness. The Harare branch had finally dissolved in internal dissension and violence which had led to Mzingeli's arrest. The world that he had dreamed of and tried to build was now in ruins. Most of those for whom he had sacrificed his own freedom to work and earn a regular wage, not only now shunned his company, but actually expressed satisfaction at his downfall. Some of them even acted as police informers against him. For a time Charles Mzingeli saw no immediate hope for himself and his people, but deep down in his complex personality, there

remained the strength to survive. As long as Rhodesia remained a society of black serfs and blind white overlords, his message would be heard. And indeed the Second World War unleashed a new atmosphere which, with easier communications between Africa and the rest of the world, changed the character of Rhodesian politics. Soon after the war, Mzingeli was able to recreate the I.C.U., calling it the Reformed I.C.U. It made an immediate impact, particularly in Salisbury. Since 1929 Mzingeli had made Salisbury his permanent home, and the movement became the focal point of trade union, social, and political feeling there. It provided the necessary organization for the struggle that we made against the implementation of the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act. Similarly it led the general strike of 1948 and gave valuable evidence to the commission appointed by the Government to deal with the grievances of the urban workers. It looked as if it was only a matter of time before Charles Mzingeli would be acclaimed as Rhodesia's Jomo Kenyatta.

African national consciousness was coming to the fore with a vengeance, and efforts were being made all over the country to unite the various African personalities and bodies into one national forum. Throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s, all kinds of pressures were put on Charles Mzingeli by black and white friends to work for unity and offer himself for election to some office in the National African Congress. But the Reformed I.C.U. leader always made certain conditions which brought these efforts to nought, much to the distress, indeed anger, of his admirers.

Convinced that I knew Mzingeli well, I hoped that I would achieve what all others had failed to achieve. I was a Federal civil servant then, working in London. When I returned to Salisbury from London for a brief spell in 1960, I took the opportunity, tackling Mzingeli on the question of unity. But Mzingeli would not listen. He said that he could not trust this new generation of so-called national leaders. My mission was an utter failure.

While he was still a factor to reckon with in politics, the one compliment that both his friends and enemies paid him was that Mzingeli was incorruptible. Mzingeli started his I.C.U. career with the idealistic impression that all Africans were basically as honest as himself. But to his increasing disillusionment, he

discovered that Africans informed on him, maligned him and some even hated him, and that he suffered just as much from the actions of his own people as he did from those of the Europeans who manipulated them. The cumulative effect of all this was to make him a deeply suspicious man, who refused to take anyone, man or woman, white or black, on their merits, however plausible their motives might appear to be at first sight. Here perhaps lies the real reason why Charles Mzingeli was overtaken by the tide of political events that he himself had originally initiated. He became a permanent prisoner of suspicion, fearing that the young modern leaders of African nationalism would betray him, just as he had been betrayed by trade union colleagues in the old I.C.U. which had perished in violence.

As a postscript to this survey of the early manifestations of African nationalism in Rhodesia, I must add that it is my firm conviction that the 1930s presented Europeans with a perfect opportunity to win the trust and co-operation of their black fellow men. In spite of the rise of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union at the end of the twenties, in spite of the single-handed struggles staged by men like Matthew Zwimba, and in spite of the anxiety and disappointment of most articulate Africans over the passing of the Land Apportionment Act and the Industrial Conciliation Act, the majority of Africans, especially those in rural areas, were still prepared to accept white leadership. The African chiefs had long been reduced to impotent nonentities in both local and national politics. Neither the Government, the white population nor the mass of the ordinary black people counted these chiefs as anything more than remnants of the dead past. The growing political consciousness among the black populace was generally unorganized, except in the urban centres such as Salisbury and Bulawayo, which, as we have seen, attracted the educated elite. As a rule, apart from those who fell under the spell of the I.C.U., the majority of workers were too preoccupied with the problem of trying to improve their earnings to be excited by the broad questions of race and political power. Political militants were in fact a tiny minority and lived mainly in the towns, out of touch with the vast mass of the people in the country. It is tragic that the opportunity offered at that time for the beginnings of co-operation between the races was so resolutely squandered.

No book on Rhodesia would be complete without discussing sex as an aspect of the racial problem. Naturally, the subject is generally treated as taboo by the settlers, such are their deep-seated fears and prejudices on the subject. Probably the biggest nightmare of the white Rhodesians—and the main foundation-stone of their intransigence—is the fear of what could happen as a result of a free association between black and white in the country.

Dr Richard Gray makes a comment, which I think is the key to the thought processes of the white community in Rhodesia. 'An abhorrence of miscegenation was general, it clinched the argument and perhaps sometimes it was even a substitute for thought.'* He was writing on the situation in the inter-war period in Rhodesia when miscegenation was regarded as such a fearful problem that the settlers generally referred to it as 'the black peril'.

A fuller scientific study was made by Cyril A. Rogers and C. Frantz and their conclusions suggested that fear of sexual intimacy between black and white, especially between African men and European women, lay at the bottom of most of their prejudices.†

When the white pioneers arrived in Rhodesia there were few white women among them. In such a situation it was inevitable that they should turn to black women. But they were determined, right from the beginning, to make their feminine kind sacred and untouchable to the African male. The British South Africa Company passed an ordinance in 1903 to suppress immorality. In terms of this legislation a white woman found

* Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, London, 1960 (page 19).

† *Racial Themes in Southern Rhodesia: The Attitudes and Behaviour of the White Population*, Cyril A. Rogers and C. Frantz, Yale University Press, 1962.

guilty of illicit intercourse with a black male was liable to two years hard labour, while the African had five years imprisonment imposed on him for the same offence. Another ordinance was passed in 1916, making an act 'of indecency' between a black male and a white female an offence. But right from the beginning to this day European men and African women have not been legally deprived of their right to sexual intercourse. Where European males have raped African women the sentences have been light; but where the offender was a black man and the victim a white woman, the punishment has always been extremely savage. In the ordinance of 1903, the death penalty was ordered for black men who attempted to rape or actually raped white women.

In the next thirty years or so, a total of thirty black people were to be hanged by white Rhodesia for this crime and in terms of this legislation, embodying the worst masculine instincts of the ruling race. The best illustration is the crime which occurred in 1935 and caused extreme ill-feeling among Africans.

During the 1930s, the Anglican and Methodist missionaries were in the habit of recruiting African teachers with good qualifications from South Africa. Even the Rhodesian Government did the same, despite its official policy, which treated the Africans from the South as prohibited immigrants.

One of these imported schoolmasters was an unusual man called Ndatshana. He was sophisticated and refined, but coming from Cape Province, the most liberal province in South Africa, he was ill-prepared for the social conventions prevailing in Southern Rhodesia. Suave and amusing, he struck a responsive chord in the hearts of everyone, black or white, with whom he associated. But Ndatshana had no discretion. And that was his undoing.

At the Anglican Mission of St Faith's near Umtali, where he was teaching, there was a white woman who was a member of the hospital staff. Ndatshana fell heavily in love with her or she with him—the facts became confused because of the political and racial content of the affair. In the tragedy that followed, however, Ndatshana was accused of raping her. He was arrested and thrown into detention.

Soon the news of the crime spread and it aroused the strongest feelings throughout Rhodesia in all kinds of African and European circles. Some missionaries and liberal settlers tried

anxiously to find some excuse, even the tiniest loophole in the law, which might save the neck of this distinguished African from the gallows. I remember, for instance, Father Burbridge of St Peter's Mission coming to Chishawasha to sound the opinion of the senior African teacher, Simon Tawoneyi, on this matter. But, in the final analysis, such pressures proved fruitless. The Government took the view that the law must take its course. It did and Ndatshana was hanged. He was the last African to be murdered by the state for this crime; Africans saw in his fate the ultimate expression of European fear and hatred for the black man.

Such was the fear of 'the black peril', such was the revulsion against a black man taking a white woman in a Rhodesian white masculine community, that an African man and a European woman in love would have little hope of escaping punishment if found out. For the white woman, there was only one recourse and some of them turned to it at the crucial moment. She could always cry rape. In such circumstances, anything the African said in self-defence was not likely to be believed. Indeed, I remember an incident that happened in Salisbury when I was a journalist. An African domestic servant approached his mistress employer on a Christmas day and said, 'Kisimisi, Missus'. The woman had him arrested by the police on the charge that he had asked her for a kiss. The court accepted her word and he was sentenced to twelve months' jail with hard labour. The truth was that this man, being uneducated, meant to say 'Christmas, Missus,' the short form of 'Christmas Box, Missus,' which most black domestics in Rhodesia say to their employers every Christmas day in the hope of being given some present. He told the court that this is all he had meant, but it would not believe him.

The true position about this problem has been that most white women, as most white men in Rhodesia, especially if they were the employers, could have sexual intercourse on demand with their African servants. During my days in Salisbury, I heard it said on numerous occasions by African domestic employees that if the 'missus' employer ordered her cook or waiter to sleep with her, he had no choice but to obey. On the other hand, if he were so misguided as to refuse to do so, wounding her pride, she would report him for trying to rape her. The only course of action that such an African could take, if he had

the courage and the imagination, was to report to the police immediately such an approach had been made.

The law forbidding sexual intercourse between black men and white women remained on the statute book of Southern Rhodesia until 1962, when it was repealed by Sir Edgar Whitehead. Southern Rhodesia, then a part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, cared about its image abroad and wished to make some contribution to the concept of partnership. A well-known African journalist was arrested for having an affair with a white girl, and this sparked off a great deal of adverse publicity for Rhodesia. Sir Edgar, wisely, seized on the opportunity to persuade Parliament to abolish this piece of legislation. He succeeded, but I do not doubt that it contributed to his defeat in December 1962.

The relationship between black men and white women was a very special feature of Rhodesian white thinking before the Second World War. As Dr Richard Gray says, in Southern Rhodesia the fear 'of black peril was one of the deeper motives supporting a policy of segregation'. He goes on, 'responsible' citizens urged, despite a possibly increased danger of miscegenation, that African girls should replace men as domestic servants. In July 1930 the Federation of Women's Institutes issued a questionnaire on the subject, and a prominent woman, Mrs Tawse-Jollie, gave her principal reasons for opposing male domestic labour. Replying to the questionnaire, she made the following comments:

1. The Black Peril question. I do not think in recent years there has been a single Black Peril case which was not traced to a house-boy.

2. The incredible carelessness of new settlers in this matter, permitting these native men to enter their bedrooms and perform the most intimate duties . . . Quite recently I was talking to a patient in a maternity hospital, who sat up in bed in a flimsy nightgown, when a native of full age entered her room, without knocking, and proceeded to clean the floor, etc. I consider the employment of such men in women's hospitals a positive scandal, and as long as women acquiesce in such things the Black Peril will grow . . .

The introduction of women servants would solve one of the greatest difficulties about life in this country . . . No native

would attempt to rape a white woman if a woman of his own race was anywhere near.

Later, in 1959, I was to have an experience which illustrated that the old views on the question were still as virulent as ever. I agreed to serve the Federal Government in the capacity of a Press Attaché at Rhodesia House in London. As far as I was concerned, mine was the serious task of helping to convince my people and the politicians in Britain that racial partnership was the wisest philosophy, and that we should pursue it in order to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the peoples in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Shortly before I left Salisbury for London, a white man, middle-class, highly educated, thoughtful and supposedly liberal, quietly took me aside one day and gave me a piece of advice. Firstly, he said that he was very pleased about my appointment and secondly, he hoped that I would play a useful role, particularly in seeing that African students in England did not play around with white girls. I looked at him with astonishment, wondering whether he was really serious. However, I controlled my anger and asked him why he had come to Africa. His answer was that one of his ancestors used to sell black slaves and he had come to Africa in order to right the wrongs that had been done to my people by him. I thanked him for his congratulations and said no more.

During my London appointment, I was invited to join a panel of three people, who were to answer questions from an audience of several thousand British sixth formers at the Westminster Hall. One of the questions that came up concerned marriage between black and white. Innocently, I expressed my view on the subject, saying that a normal, democratic society should permit these marriages. When white Rhodesia read press reports of what I had said, the Federal House of Parliament in Salisbury erupted in fits of moral indignation. The leader of the Opposition, Winston Field, demanded that I should be recalled for expressing views which were contrary to Rhodesian opinion. My boss, the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Malcolm Barrow, defended me as best he could, saying that I had either been misquoted or indiscreet.

To look at the other side of the coin, it has never been a crime for a white man to have the sexual favours of an African

woman. She has always been, so to speak, his for the demanding. No white man in the whole history of Southern Rhodesia has been hanged for raping a black woman. It has seldom been easy for an African girl to convince the law that she has been outraged by a white man. I know only of one incident. This involved a police official called Longridge of the Banket area, who, in the early 1940s, was sentenced to nearly four years for raping a married woman. She happened to be the wife of an African policeman, who worked under Longridge. Her evidence, plus the testimony of her husband and his colleagues in the force, must have been unusually forceful. Most black women would have failed to make the charge stick.

Having acquired power, Godfrey Martin Huggins retained it for so long that he seemed to have become a permanent institution. The question is: What sort of a person was he, politically, and as a human being?

To the rank and file white settlers, Huggins in time seemed Cecil Rhodes reincarnate, the man to whom Rhodesia owed its very existence, its past, present and future. But to the vast majority of Africans the picture was very different. Because they knew him mostly in the context of the reactionary policies he pursued in the realm of native affairs, they regarded Huggins as both inhuman and unchristian. The peasants identified him with the harsh measures enforced against them by the administration, such as being evicted from their lands to make way for white people. The urban dwellers held him directly responsible for the pass system, housing shortage, low wages, poverty, police harassment and all the other manifestations of white supremacy. Even today many remember him as the founder of the policy of segregation.

I was more fortunate than most of my fellow men in that I got to know Huggins personally. I first met him when I was a student at Kutama. In April 1948 I was to have another opportunity to know him. I was a member of the delegation from Harare, which assembled in Milton Buildings, Salisbury, and tried to impress on him that the general strike of Africans in the country was the result of genuine social, economic and political grievances, which needed democratic reforms.

On both these occasions, I recognized that Huggins had a certain humanity about him. Indeed in 1948, his reactions surpassed my wildest hopes. The Prime Minister actually admitted that African workers in Rhodesia were no different from workers anywhere else, and that they were reacting to their working conditions in the same way as the proletariats in Europe had reacted to their industrial situations. He

appointed a commission to investigate their grievances and created industrial boards to deal with their problems. I had expected Huggins to institute a reign of terror against all of us who had been in the forefront of this black revolt. I was therefore fascinated at his reaction.

Given his awareness of the existence of the world outside the Rhodesian white enclave, and the enormous influence and respect he wielded in Whitehall, he would have had the power to lay the foundations for a lasting economic and political community in Central Africa. Yet, Huggins was, like just about all white minority leaders in Africa, a racist. Racism had brought him into power in the first instance, and, to stay in power, white supremacy had to be preserved at all costs.

Probably the most ambitious attempt in the country's history to solve the problem was made soon after Huggins achieved power. It came in the form of an announcement by the then Chief Native Commissioner, Colonel Clive Lancaster Carbutt, an even more inflexible segregationist than Huggins was. Carbutt proposed that the Zambezi and the Sabi valleys should be declared the permanent homelands of the African people, while the rest of the country should remain the exclusive preserve of the Europeans. Then in 1934 he and Huggins approached the British Government asking that Southern Rhodesia should be recognized as 'white', while parts of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland should be declared 'black'. Under this scheme, they reasoned, white Southern Rhodesia would be relieved of its awkward native problem and the practical difficulties of keeping the black man down, for ambitious Africans in the 'European' south could be encouraged to migrate to the 'black' areas where there would be scope for them to advance as far as they wished without interference.

Fortunately, the copper mining companies as well as the British Government turned down this proposal. Huggins and Carbutt were frustrated. Huggins was to continue pursuing the same end, but under different guises. For the time being he was content in confining himself to the domestic scene. The vote was crucial. And so he assailed the principle of the common voters' roll, saying that with the spread of education and economic prosperity, more and more Africans would qualify for the franchise, thereby swamping the white population. In that event, the whites would lose their power, racial

discrimination would go and the country would turn into another Liberia. The only logical step to take was to reform the existing franchise system, so as to prevent any more Africans coming onto the voters' roll. In compensation, he proposed that Southern Rhodesia should adopt the South African system whereby white men were especially elected to speak for us.

Again, Huggins approached the British Government and demanded the power to disenfranchise the Africans. To the great relief of my people, Britain refused to grant this right. It seemed that now the African voice counted and it certainly helped to keep the African political temperature down.

But in practice, the theoretical right to vote was one thing and actually getting onto the electoral roll was quite another. The registering officers, who were exclusively white, created all kinds of obstacles. Like their opposite number in the Southern States of America, but perhaps with more subtlety, they always managed to refuse the majority of the black applicants for the vote. In the years that I worked on the *African Press* in Salisbury (1946-59), I came to understand more realistically the machinations these hostile administrators employed in order to prevent African applicants achieving the vote. They would say that their writing was not legible or that certain places were not filled in properly; some officers ordered Africans to go to their Native Commissioners for references, while others were plainly abusive. All too often my fellow men lost patience and gave up the attempt altogether. But when challenged on this issue, white Rhodesia simply blamed my people for failing to take advantage of their 'democratic' right to get the vote.

However, the important thing in the early 1930s was that the British Government had used its constitutional privilege to refuse Huggins the mandate to close the voters' roll to the Africans. There was renewed faith in the British Government and it was partially forgiven for its past collusion with the settlers. We believed that, given the true knowledge of our adversities under the settler rule, Britain would save us from our national misfortunes. As years went by, this confidence increased; it did not occur to any African that when the crunch came, the British Government and people would let us down, as they did when Mr Smith declared U.D.I.

In the mid-thirties, Huggins advanced in his thinking to

the extent of accepting that the rural Africans should be granted some way of expressing their views. He wanted their co-operation in the implementation of schemes that were designed to improve the country areas. To this end, he passed the Native Councils Act in 1937, to enable the chiefs, headmen and nominated individuals to set up local councils. As Huggins saw these institutions, they would have the power to make bye-laws, impose local taxes and provide employment to educated Africans in such capacities as clerks, and so keep them out of the white man's towns, where, because of frustrations, they usually came in contact with political militancy. The Chief Native Commissioner of the time, Charles Bullock, thought this measure was far too liberal and succeeded in convincing Huggins that these councils should not have powers of taxation. Thus, until 1943 when the Native Affairs officialdom conceded this right in principle, these bodies were mere talking-chambers.

This conflict of opinion between the Prime Minister and the head of the Department of Native Affairs illustrates two fundamental points. First of all, it shows how excluded African opinion was in Southern Rhodesia, even in local affairs. Secondly, it proves that despite their professed intention to give the black population separate but equal opportunities, the Europeans are so afraid of the full consequences of an honest form of racial segregation that in practice African advancement is either very, very gradual or non-existent. Any relaxation in the restrictions imposed on us, such as the right to drink European liquor, to own houses in the black urban townships and to use certain so-called white hotels, came about only after many decades of tortuous debates and arguments. These liberal postures were reluctantly made in the wake of the policy of partnership preached by the Federal Government. As regards the Native Councils, they were even in the 1960s a matter of bitter recrimination between the Africans, who wished to run them in their own way, and the Chief Native Commissioners who insisted that their white officials should continue to be chairmen of and exercise the power of veto in these bodies.

In 1935 Huggins made a bid to expand his political influence and power in Central Africa. He proposed the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. He was now the head of a

firmly based Government, and was accepted by most white settlers as the man of the moment, fully capable of finding the proper solution to the native problem. Thus he spoke with supreme confidence and authority, and he could ignore the impotent Opposition, the Rhodesian Labour Party, and those who opposed his new scheme on the grounds that, if achieved, Europeans would finally sink under the weight of a greatly increased black population.

The Prime Minister's economic arguments for amalgamation were impressive. Big business, such as the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, was behind him, realizing that the three territories would offer greater prospects for capital investment and commercial enterprise as one political and economic entity than as separate units. What is more, Sir Herbert Stanley and Sir Hubert Young, the Governors of Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, respectively, were in favour of some kind of association. Since the statement made by the British Government that African interests in her colonies should be paramount, whites in Northern Rhodesia felt that they were expendable in the eyes of the British Government. In anger, they turned to Huggins for salvation, thus giving him support for his expansionist dreams.

He might well have succeeded in reshaping the map of Central Africa in that decade, but his mistake, and it was a fatal one, was to think that Africa's destiny could permanently be settled without the approval of its black majority.

As his campaign gathered momentum, the Africans in the three territories grasped with horror the implications of Huggin's move: that the tentacles of the hated policy of racial segregation in my country would simply be extended to the two protectorates north of the Zambezi.

They were stung into a sense of national outrage. Africans in Salisbury, Lusaka and Zomba, tribal chiefs, trade unionists and other leaders, though unco-ordinated, began to speak with basically the same voice. It was the beginning of a conscious, clearly noticeable black nationalism in all the three territories, which culminated in the destruction of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the happy emergence of the black states of Zambia and Malawi in the 1960s.

In reaction to Huggins, Britain sent, in 1938, a Commission of Inquiry to Central Africa composed of three British Members

of Parliament, drawn from the three main parties, and headed by Lord Bledisloe. Their arrival set in motion an impassioned public controversy. Although I was too young to have had any contact with any member of this body, I followed its deliberations through the newspapers. What became obvious, the moment the Commissioners started their enquiry, was the sense of danger throughout the African community; black opinion saw this ambitious design as an evil move which might make their enslavement permanent.

This was the only chance Africans had to expose Huggins' parallel development policy and the philosophy of white supremacy as degrading and dangerous. For the first time, white Rhodesia was forcibly reminded how deeply the Africans under their tutelage resented their rule. It was also demonstrated that the grossly inadequate and controlled system of education given to my people with the express purpose of making them tame and obedient, had in fact bred many articulate black men, capable of arguing logically and tearing to pieces the world of white privilege and African suppression. Scores of teachers and distinguished ministers of religion indicted their country's system. But even the academically unschooled chiefs knew their Rhodesian political alphabet. They went back to 1890 and from that point of time enumerated many of the sins of commission and omission perpetrated by white Rhodesia against their defenceless race. Reduced to its basic essentials, their message was that the white man was demonstrably unfit to govern black people in Southern Rhodesia, and therefore he should on no account be allowed to extend his influence to the north.

The Bledisloe Commission in due course submitted its report, which was accepted by the Africans as a vindication of what they had said: namely that amalgamation was premature. While conceding that the plan was beneficial in principle, it pointed out the differences in the native policies of the three territories. While praising Southern Rhodesia for its African social services, such as its free medical benefits, it indicted the country's native policy, especially in the field of labour. It was dismayed by the Industrial Conciliation Act, which denied the Rhodesian Africans the right to form recognized trade unions. It recommended the formation of an inter-territorial council, which came into being in 1944 and was called the Central African Council.

The African sense of relief, that a particularly insidious form of white imperialism had been nipped in the bud, was unbounded. Once again the name of Great Britain rose high in the estimation of all the Africans of the three territories. We in Southern Rhodesia were convinced that, through this Commission, we had fully educated the British Government about the travesties of white rule. From now on we felt the British Government would maintain extra vigilance on Huggins, and compel him to begin the process of de-segregation.

The Report of the Bledisloe Commission was published in 1939, and Huggins was bitterly disappointed. But we did not have to wait long before we were given some proof that the Prime Minister was capable of adjusting himself. In a major statement on native policy, which he made in 1941, Huggins made the astonishing claim that Africans and Europeans were blood relations, whose differences in colour, habits of living and outlook mainly stemmed from climate and environment. As I recall, he affirmed that Africans were descendants of European immigrants who had strayed into Africa many centuries before and had become black during this unspecified period of isolation from the frigid zones of Europe. From this eccentric historical theory, Huggins urged the white settlers to accept in good heart the responsibility of advancing their black fellow men and bringing them to their level of civilization. When this stage of refinement had been attained, he intimated, the two races would be equal socially, economically and politically. Racial segregation in all its various guises would no longer be necessary.

As the reader can imagine, this unorthodox expression of opinion from the lips of the chief exponent and manipulator of segregation fell with shattering effect on the ears of his white followers. White Rhodesians in those days were absolutely enraged if someone suggested that they had any trace of coloured blood in their veins! Here was their leader, who had raised the concept of race separation into a religious cult, telling them that, under the skin, they were of the same species with their black servants. How could he have altered all these views so dramatically?

The Africans were no less amazed, in some cases they almost doubted the sanity of this white leader, with whom they associated all their existing miseries. I must have read Mr

Huggins' reported statement two or three times before I would accept its authenticity. It sounded as if he was trying to be funny, in a sickly sort of way. Yet, as a member of the underprivileged race, I soon drifted into a mood of wishful-thinking, deluding myself that the Prime Minister meant what he was reported to have said, and I was to discover that these reactions were common to other Africans.

But, of course, the passing of time proved that Huggins had not meant a word he had said in that memorable statement. He had been flying a kite to appease British liberals and socialists so that they should not stand in his way in the future. He still had his eyes on the vast copper reserves of Northern Rhodesia, and he felt it expedient to woo liberal elements in Britain and thereby get their support in the next stage of his campaign.

His tactics achieved some useful results for him. Many congratulated him on his courage and looked forward to an entirely new era in his attempts to solve the black and white problem. Seen in the context of the general attitudes to race prevailing at the time, especially in Southern Rhodesia, his was in fact an act of courage. The Europeans were shocked, but there was not a backlash of the kind responsible for the overthrow of Sir Edgar Whitehead in 1962, which brought in the dictatorship of the Rhodesian Front Party. In other words, Huggins got away with his gamble. He proved that he could chase with the hounds and run with the hares, and still keep an impregnable position. This remained unchallenged until he retired from politics in 1956 after successfully launching the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Despite the efforts of our rulers to perpetuate our ignorance, education, formal or informal, came our way, and with it political awareness. Not only did we keep up with political events at home, but news from abroad came in on an ever increasing tide. We read and listened almost as much as the settlers did. However hard the Rhodesian Government tried to keep us immune from influences, it could not regulate our thinking.

When I was a student at Kutama, we read every newspaper from cover to cover. We also used to gather in the evenings outside Father O'Hea's office and listen to the world news from

his radio, 'wireless', as it was called in those days. One night we were stunned as the news came through this box. We heard that Adolf Hitler had ordered the massacre of some of his Nazi colleagues, including the powerful Röhm. This was on the night of 30 June 1934. Father O'Hea explained as well as he could who the Nazis were and what Hitler was trying to achieve.

From this moment on, we became deeply absorbed in the Nazi movement and followed it right up to Hitler's death and its final destruction. We were to learn a great deal, both for our horror and comfort. Clearly, the Nazis were after absolute power and, to achieve it, were prepared to use every means, fair or foul.

In 1935 Mussolini's soldiers invaded and ultimately conquered Ethiopia, which made some of us especially angry. I remember seeing a picture in a Catholic paper showing His Holiness the Pope giving his blessing to a crowd of grinning Italian soldiers on the eve of their departure for Ethiopia. My reaction was one of nausea. These men were going to murder, pillage and rape our distant kith and kin in Abyssinia, and therefore deserved the curse and not the blessing of the Holy Father.

Then there came the Spanish civil war. I was now at the Seminary and we followed this fratricidal struggle with intense, almost personal involvement. Being Catholics, and our main source of news being Catholic newspapers, there could be no question as to which side our sympathies lay. We were passionately for Generalissimo Franco, who, in our eyes, was fighting for the honour and freedom of Catholic Spain against the designs of the Republicans to turn the country into a satellite of Bolshevik Russia. Never for a moment did we stop to think that anything good might be said in favour of Franco's enemies.

Thus, I was jolted into an acute awareness of the sick state of the world and the pervading power for evil of the white races who controlled it. At first the white Rhodesian public did not seem to pay much attention to the distant rumblings of the international conflicts that were building up. But as time went on, these people had to heed the growing ranting fury of the German Chancellor, and when they did, we Africans choked on their jingoism and the pride in their voices as they cried out loudly in defence of their democratic way of life that Herr Hitler threatened. They vilified not only Hitler but also anyone

who was unfortunate enough to have been born a German. We were expected to hate these people. Germans were portrayed as an evil race, who had scarcely changed since the days of Attila the Hun, and who were out to make us all, black and white, their slaves.

Some Africans went along with this general revulsion against the Nazi mission of conquest and racial purity, but many of us refused to believe that the fearful situation in Germany was fundamentally different from what was going on in our own homeland. While the sufferings of the Jews were becoming a matter of deep anxiety to all mankind, as the civilized world awoke to their plight, we had no such advantages. No other people cared about our rights to anything like the same extent.

We lived under a system of racial discrimination and injustice that was among the crudest in the world. We had a pass law system which humiliated us every day of our lives. It demanded that we should carry many pieces of paper, including the standard registration certificate, 'Chitupa', and tax receipt. At any time, a policeman could demand to see these documents. Africans paid thousands of pounds every day to the state and to local government to obtain them. The price of each pass was usually more than two shillings. The fine for the offence of being found without any one of them ranged from two shillings and sixpence to a pound or considerably more. As our income was low, the jails were full of black people who would not have been considered offenders anywhere else in the civilized world.

The parks and other public places were all barred to Africans, except to the nannies and those who catered for the comfort of their white masters and mistresses. Africans who strayed into these preserves of the privileged race risked the humiliation of being arrested or being told in the roughest manner to move out.

There were separate entrances and exits in the Post Offices and other Government and municipal buildings, as well as in certain shops which employed white men and women who abused Africans or ignored them until the last white person was served. All letters from Native Commissioners and other civil servants to Africans were addressed in one standard form, namely: 'To Native so and so'. No African was accorded the title of 'Mr'. All in all, nowhere could an African feel free of the danger of arrest or provocation from Europeans.

Nearly all the so-called 'European' newspapers, believing in

the faithful execution of their duty, published news and views on just about every racial view that was held among the white farmers, politicians, city councillors and ordinary citizens. There was, until the 1950s, no African daily newspaper. Therefore we could not avoid reading white newspapers. We came across statements, either in the form of reported speeches or letters to the editor, which again and again stressed that the black people were primitive, lazy, thieves and liars. By implication, these attributes gave the writers or speakers every justification for the way they exploited the African. It was impressed on us that we were like children, but, unlike real children, we would take at least two thousand years to grow up and reach the state of manhood that the white man had attained.

Until 1943 there was only one paper catering for the African population. This was the *Bantu Mirror*, which came out once a week. White-owned and managed, it had much less freedom than the white Press to reflect the opinions of its readers on questions of race and politics. The man who started it in 1932, Mr B. G. Paver, was strongly suspected of having Communist leanings just because he had the temerity to suggest that black people needed a newspaper. Whatever it set out to achieve, it failed to have any effect on white racialism or voice African reaction to it. However, as time went on, and the war began, the Government realized the value of the *Bantu Mirror* for putting across its propaganda to the Africans, hoping thereby to whip up their much-needed enthusiasm for the cause against the Germans.

As the war in Europe developed into a global conflict, the Government formed a special African wing of the army. Called the Rhodesian African Rifles, under an ex-Native Commissioner called Colonel Walker, this body of black men was soon a household name throughout the country. In the African Reserves the Native Commissioners used all the pressures and influence they had to secure recruits for the R.A.R. Many Africans answered this call, induced to do so as much by the glamour of the uniform as by the lack of employment opportunities otherwise available.

It was not long, however, before these men were deeply dissatisfied by the special conditions which obtained in this regiment. The controversy that ensued was centred mainly on the question of boots, which the Government thought the black

soldiers should do without. If we are good enough to fight and die for the King, we are good enough to wear boots, Africans cried. This was a well-voiced grievance and for once the Government took heed of African opinion, which was supported by many Europeans, who could not see what possible harm boots on the feet of native soldiers would do to the dignity and prestige of the white man in Rhodesia.

On the other hand the extreme right-wing settlers regarded the training of Africans for warfare as a dangerous thing to do. They would rather the Government followed the example of the South African authorities, who totally refused to arm Africans, and used them only as drivers and stretcher-bearers in their army. Huggins, on the other hand, seemed proud that his Africans were trained in the use of real rifles, machine guns and other military weapons, a bold gesture that made him appear again the kind of man who might persuade his followers to temper their racial attitudes and also gave, wrongly, Rhodesia the appearance of being more liberal than South Africa was.

In 1941 I was teaching at St Augustine's Secondary School at Penhalonga. A fellow teacher, Patrick Rubatika, and I were walking along the pavement of a street in the town of Umtali when we encountered four smartly-dressed African soldiers going in the opposite direction. Not far from us were two white women, one of whom, at the sight of these men, said very loudly that she couldn't stand seeing 'kaffir' soldiers. Rubatika was then an angry young African, and burst out with, 'You are no better than the Nazis. . . . These men are going to fight for your freedom and yet you still call them kaffirs. . . .' The women turned pale and quickly walked away, but the original offender commented loudly enough for us to hear, 'My dear, these creatures are becoming cheekier and cheekier. It's Huggins' fault. . . .'

The Government appealed to Africans for their participation in other directions, and my people responded in a most positive manner. They gave money, cattle and grain to our rulers, in order to help the British Government obtain more planes and other military weapons with which to beat the Germans. By now the great flood of platitudes from European statesmen in support of freedom and democracy for all men everywhere were commonplace in Southern Rhodesia. Most Africans

believed that they too came within the definition of the democratic concepts for which this war was being fought. Indeed, the speech that Huggins made in 1941, saying that Africans and Europeans were blood-brothers, made our faith in the benefits of the forthcoming 'brave new world' seem more than just faintly possible. Thus our efforts in support of the struggle against Hitler were not entirely the result of the propaganda devised by our Native Commissioners.

But there were a great many other Africans who refused to believe that white Rhodesia included the freedom of black people in its crusade against totalitarianism. These cynics were by no means confined to the educated class. They were to be found in all sections of our society. Perhaps the most virulent antagonists were the teachers who had been trained in South Africa, who were against everything British. If they cared at all about the war it was only in so far as they hoped that the final result would upset the structure of white power in the country.

Then there were those who put a definite spiritual interpretation on this international conflict. In this war they saw the wrathful hand of God punishing the white races for all their sins—the sins of greed, colonial graft and racial oppression. They believed that Hitler could not help himself; he was an instrument of higher forces and his mission of destruction was intended by the Almighty to make the white races pay in blood and tears for their past wrongs, especially in Africa. The Watch Tower Movement, the Jehovah's Witnesses, as we called its adherents, quickly came in to give this general belief Biblical authority. This sect had an enormous appeal to the ordinary Africans, who found the conventional Christian denominations too reserved, hypocritical and respectable for their temperament. To the followers of this movement, the white races were truly doomed. Its black preachers, who mushroomed all over the country, shouted this message from their pulpits in forest clearings. Naturally, they could not possibly enjoy this freedom of religious worship for long. The Rhodesian Government quickly stepped in and declared the Watch Tower illegal, which it remained for the rest of the war.

Caught in this state of official nervousness, the Chief Native Commissioner of the time, Charles Bullock, was not content to leave the dissemination of war news among Africans to com-

mercial newspapers, the radio and the many self-appointed black newsmongers, who put over some of the weirdest information to their less informed fellow men. He decided early on in the war to publish a special bulletin in English, Shona and Sindebele, which was supposed to contain the facts, and was distributed free to Africans throughout the country. Sent out separately as a supplement to the *Bantu Mirror*, it was intended to counteract the alarming rumours that Bullock knew were being bandied about. And yet this bulletin was so biased that, apart from its entertainment value, it was worthless. According to this little paper, all the British and, later, Allied troops were everywhere far superior to the Germans. While Hitler's soldiers suffered heavy losses and very often were utterly punished, our side always managed either to win great victories or to retreat in splendid order and with few losses to themselves. Most of the news it carried was days, if not weeks old, so that those who depended entirely upon it were often grossly misinformed. We called it the Lying Bulletin.

While teaching at Chishawasha during the war, I came across an intriguing situation. It was the way the conflicting loyalties between the English and the German members of this religious community were displayed. The English were openly and proudly anti-Hitler and anti-Mussolini. They let their patriotic sentiments go all out in praise of their race and Empire, which had been especially chosen to defend humanity's freedom against the dark forces of Nazi Germany. In the vanguard of this British priestly loyalty was the Rev. Father Henry Ferguson, as amusing and at the same time as hot-tempered a missionary as it was possible to imagine. He called Hitler and his 'jackal', Mussolini, all kinds of nasty names.

On the other hand, the Germans maintained the natural loyalty that they owed to their country. I understood this and took it for granted that they had no sympathy with Hitler. I thought that they would wish to see him defeated and the German nation return to a democratic form of government. Under this illusion, I decided to write a play, caricaturing the German and Italian dictators. The students I chose to impersonate them were so well cast that they delighted the audience.

But the next day a message came from the Convent, saying that the nuns, who were all Germans and who had witnessed

my play without displaying any emotion, had been deeply offended by what I had done, making Hitler seem such a ridiculous and dangerous man. It was a revelation to me. I was expected to apologize for this indiscretion. But I refused to do any such thing because I did not feel that I had done anything wrong or unfair. I let it be known to the Sisters that my conscience would not allow me to compromise in this way, and the affair was ended. But I had seen another illustration that where race and nationalism were concerned, religion was of secondary importance.

The settlers in Rhodesia have again and again reminded Britain that they fought and died in her defence in the last two world wars. And they go on to say that because of this contribution, they should be forgiven their act of rebellion by being granted legal independence. But they forget that my people made similar sacrifices. A substantial number of the soldiers in the Rhodesian African Rifles left the country and saw war service, first in Abyssinia and finally in the Far East. These men fought gallantly, some losing their limbs and others their lives, thus contributing to the security of that freedom which white Rhodesians have always kept for themselves.

I met some of those who returned at the end of the war. Great care had been taken by their white officers to ensure that their minds were not polluted with notions alien to the Rhodesian way of life. Thus, as they were due to return home, they were told that they should forget the little freedoms that they had enjoyed outside Rhodesia, they were to root out of their minds any strange habits they had picked up from other coloured men, and think and behave just like all the other ordinary Africans in the country.

An uncle of mine, Stanislaus Vambe, who gave distinguished service in the detective branch of the Rhodesian Police force, told me the following story:

One of these black veterans was treated with extreme rudeness at a police station in Salisbury. Annoyed, he complained that as someone who had risked his life in the last war for the freedom of white men in Rhodesia, he deserved a little courtesy. For this kind of 'cheek', he was taken to a private room and given a severe beating. He was told: 'You joined the army of your own accord. . . . We paid you . . . and we owe you nothing now. . . . You are a native and always will be. . . . Don't you

ever forget that when you talk to a white man, especially a police officer.'

The majority of these ex-servicemen in Salisbury and other towns were apparently perfectly normal both physically and mentally. This prompted the question in the minds of many naturally suspicious black people: what happened to those who must have been severely injured and maimed in that murderous struggle? Soon enough some claimed that they knew how the white authorities, both Rhodesian and British, had solved the awkward problem which the African human wreckage of this war would have created in the villages. As they were sailing back home, the story went, all badly injured black soldiers from all parts of British Africa were put on a separate boat, which was deliberately sent to the bottom of the Indian Ocean. True or false, it was quite impossible to verify this macabre account.

By the beginning of the Second World War, Chishawasha Mission and the VaShawasha had witnessed many changes. Since the early 1930s other people, mainly workers from Salisbury, had been coming year by year to settle in the area, while many of my own tribe had moved out. The VaShawasha could no longer say that they had a distinct tribal personality of their own. That was now a thing of the past. White authority, both physical and spiritual, was now absolute, if still disliked and defied from time to time.

Economically, the bulk of these men and women were entirely dependent on the employment that they found in Salisbury. While the Jesuit Fathers might have thought otherwise, the Mission merely existed as a reservoir of black labour for the whole city. Yet neither the Government nor the municipality of Salisbury accepted any responsibility to provide these people with the necessary services, such as water and electricity, let alone medical care. While the Rhodesian Government was introducing the system of native councils in the Native Reserves, it ignored completely the existence of Africans in Chishawasha, leaving them entirely as the responsibility of the Jesuit Fathers.

Apart from the education, which the Jesuit priests continued to give my people, it seemed that the Church was not very interested in my people in Chishawasha. When Father Francis Gits was transferred to Musami Mission in 1935, the standard of education and high morale he had introduced in the institution declined rapidly. More than that, since the departure of the industrious German priests and brothers in the late 1920s and early 1930s, many of the Mission's commercial ventures were either stopped altogether or reduced to a minimum, so that by 1939 Chishawasha was among the poorest of the Catholic institutions in the country.

The English Jesuits showed little inclination for agricultural

pursuits and so gave up altogether the growing of tobacco, wheat, barley and oats, which had been a source of considerable revenue to the Mission. Maize-growing continued, but on such a small scale that the yield did not feed all the children at the school. It had to be supplemented by what the head priest could afford to buy. Viticulture and fruit-growing, which once flourished here, sadly declined. This side-line had been successful because of the industry and skill of Brother Breitten, who reflected all the zeal for hard work and high standards of the German people. Although he was still alive at this time, he had been moved at various times to other missions and in his absence the vines, orange groves and other fruit trees had withered for lack of attention.

The Rev. Father Henry Ferguson ran the Chishawasha Mission when its financial situation was at its worst, and I taught there for two years, 1939-40, of his administration. I imagine that his predecessors had run the Mission and school mainly on the substantial savings built up by such energetic and thrifty men as Father Schmitz, who had managed the enterprise like a highly efficient private concern. These funds had obviously been used up. Now Chishawasha was dependent mainly on the Government's grants-in-aid, as the African mission education vote was officially termed, and probably also on a certain amount of the Jesuit Order's own resources.

The money from these sources was grossly inadequate, but no amount of pleading, even from the persuasive Jesuits, could make the Rhodesian Government grant more money for African education. In 1923 Government expenditure on African education amounted to a mere £27, 176. By 1938 it had risen to £89,539, which still represented no more than 1s. 5d. per head of the African population. With the increasing depreciation in the value of money, and the astronomical increase in the numbers of African children wishing to be educated during this phase, this rise was far less impressive than it looked.

To make matters worse for the Church, the situation in Europe was depriving the missionaries in Rhodesia of a great many of the private donations from overseas Christians, which had once flowed into the country. Certainly for Chishawasha, the fees that the black students paid were of little help in the difficulties. Henry Ferguson was visibly harassed by the pile

of debts and bills which he said he could not meet, and this affected his administrative capacity badly, as well as his relationship with us all.

As time went on, things got to such a point that the priest was forced to sell some of the Mission's fixed assets. First, it was the cattle the German Fathers had bred. And what fine herds they were! Once they were so vast that much of the area between Mashonganyika village and the Arcturus mines teemed with these animals. When they were all sold off, he turned to smaller items, such as the brass band instruments that Father Gits had acquired at great expense. Anything saleable went the same way, in fact. It seemed a wanton dispersal of what had been accumulated by many years of hard work and wise planning, and it was truly heart-breaking for some of us to see it happening. But, at the same time, it had to be done if the school was to continue to provide a measure of education for the black people of the Mission. In the end the once flourishing establishment looked desolate and derelict. Horse and mule stables and cattle paddocks were empty. Rusty, disused disc ploughs, harrows and other pieces of agricultural machinery lay around, no longer of any value to anyone.

I could have stayed on permanently at Chishawasha, where, being a local boy who had acquired a better education than most, I was already being tipped as the next head teacher. But I was restless. I hankered for a much bigger world. Marriage, a job and religious conformity were the expectations of the average member of this Mission community. Honourable though this life would have been, I could not see myself fitting contentedly into such a narrow social pattern. I looked for greater freedom, and left Chishawasha at the end of 1940 to teach at St Augustine's Secondary School in Umtali, for most of 1941, and thence to seek further education in South Africa.

However, in spite of the, to me, stifling atmosphere at home, I still saw a great deal of my family while I was teaching at Chishawasha. Of all of them, the person I was closest to was my sister Maria. If I have any image of my mother, it is based on my memory of Maria, who, people said, bore a striking resemblance to her. She was tall, soft of manner and speech and

one of the most beautiful African girls in Chishawasha. Her other name was Dambairweyi. In due course, Maria Dambairweyi Vambe married a young man called Leo Vambe, a MuShawasha, who was sufficiently far removed from our branch in blood relationship for tribal society to tolerate the union. Strictly speaking, Maria and Leo should not have married, and there were many raised eyebrows and people like grandmother Madzidza saw nothing but the dark shadows of Nemesis visiting the young couple for flouting a tribal law of old. However, after a few years of hoping and praying, Maria finally became pregnant and she and her husband rejoiced at this prospect of a child. But when the baby came, it was premature and lifeless, and my sister died soon after she was admitted into Salisbury hospital. The year was 1940. For the first time in my adult life, I cried, for she had meant so much to me.

My grandmother Madzidza was also still very much alive during this period. Sound of body and mind, she still made her presence and particularly her formidable opinions known whenever and wherever she thought necessary. As though what remained of the material and spiritual heritage of our family depended for their survival entirely on her wisdom and authority, she presided and ruled over us all with increasing matriarchal tyranny, sharply disapproving, fiercely castigating with her caustic tongue. She scoffed and snorted at all whose behaviour or views offended her standards.

Although the white man's power, influence and culture were now in the very air we breathed, Madzidza kept her blinkers firmly on and these became more and more opaque as her age and prejudices increased. For instance, Chishawasha had long moved into the age of the motor car, and several of our relations, including my brother Joseph and Leo Vambe, had one. But grandmother said that it was sheer madness for anyone to ride in these contraptions, whose speed and smell she could not stand. Not once during my life in Chishawasha did she feel any need to go to the white man's jungle, Salisbury. To *MaVengere*,* that is to say, the Mission proper which was only four or so miles away, she only went for the funerals of very

* *Vengere* (singular) means a European-type house roofed with corrugated zinc. *MaVengere*, many such houses, which therefore constitute a 'white establishment', in this case, the Chishawasha Mission, with its many buildings.

close relatives. This had nothing to do with her age, for she frequently travelled to Chinyika in Goromonzi to see her sister. Not since the early days, when Father Richartz and Father Biehler had put on brass band concerts, had she visited the church and the school for social reasons. Madzidza saw the mission station, and, of course, Salisbury, as the sources of the evils she feared and hated most.

However, strange as it may seem, Madzidza somehow condescended to learn a few words and phrases of the English language. The expression she used more frequently than all the others in her limited vocabulary was 'lazy boy'. But our tongue does not have the letter 'L'. Nor, being a phonetic language, does it form its plural by adding 's' at the end of a word. This was no bother to her. She bantuized this into 'marezee boyi'. Thus, anybody (man or woman) who seemed to her to show traces of idleness, Madzidza chastised as 'marezee boyi'. Naturally, these incursions into the foreigner's language were extremely funny and we tried frequently to stimulate her into saying more. While I was in South Africa between 1942 and 1944, Madzidza left Chishawasha to live with her sister in Chinyika. There she died in 1943, and we lost a remarkable person, one who was probably the strongest influence in my tribal upbringing.

Several of the family inherited from Madzidza some of her characteristics—grit, imagination and pride. Marimo, her son, for instance, was an almost exact reproduction of her, complete with her conservative African racial arrogance. Her daughters, my aunts, Catherine and Josephine, had something of her rough, frank wit which made their ideas so picturesque. My two brothers, John and Joseph, also had Madzidza's aggression and self-assurance. But unlike her, they accepted most of the values of the Europeans.

When he ran away from school in the early 1920s, John, the eldest, eventually found work with a Mr Law, who seemed to have been in the Government service. Mr and Mrs Law were very fond of John, who was an errand boy for them. He used to bring home all kinds of things given to him free, especially Mrs Law's used clothes and shoes, which he gave to our aunts. When he grew to manhood, John joined the district branch of the British South African Police, in which he served for over ten years.

He was a conscientious policeman. Over six feet tall, his strength and dominating character made him both feared and popular as an enforcer of the law. Even as an ordinary citizen, John Chirimuuta Vambe was not a man people would ignore. Perhaps the most talkative of all of us, he never lacked an audience. He was always quick in temper and would resort easily to fisticuffs. He gave up Christianity at some time or other after leaving Chishawasha School, because he said that Africans were distracted from their own values, which he felt was wrong. But he never developed an overt political consciousness.

Joseph Taruvinga Vambe never felt inclined to belong to any specific organization committed to challenging white authority as a whole. His was a one-man struggle for what he believed to be his basic rights. No doubt the influence of the Chishawasha Mission had a profoundly calming effect on him, as did also the discipline and training in the Rhodesian police force, which he joined just before I went to the Seminary. But he was brave, proud and openly indifferent to the generally assumed superiority of the settlers.

Running away from school at an early age, Joseph went to Salisbury and did all kinds of jobs. He found a certain amount of excitement by accompanying George Nhandara, a police relation from Chishawasha, on his nightly beats in some of the sleazy areas of Salisbury. But by the beginning of the 1930s Joseph realized that a little more education and technical training were essential in a white man's world, and so he returned to Chishawasha School, where he joined probably the last class of boys to be apprenticed in the building trade. White politicians were decrying the effort to produce skilled black artisans, and Chishawasha, like other African institutions, was succumbing to this pressure. My brother was just in time. He acquired considerable skill as a bricklayer, and learned to draw simple architectural plans.

At the end of this course, he was engaged on various jobs, in Salisbury and on outlying farms, and earning far better wages than those of the majority of the ordinary black working men. But Joseph found that, because of racial prejudice and the passing of the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1934, the African builder not only did not get the rate for the job, he was also the last to be hired and the first to be fired. And so he was forced to

spend long periods in idleness because of the scarcity of jobs, which were increasingly reserved for white artisans. In the end, and reluctantly, he decided to join the police force.

He was a model policeman, but he refused to be moulded into a robot-instrument of the law, as was expected. He bought himself a car soon after joining. Cars had become an important status symbol among the people of Chishawasha during this period. His was an open model T Ford. Unhappily, police regulations did not allow any African to bring his car into the camp, and Joseph decided to ignore this ruling. He insisted on bringing his car right up to the front door of his flat. His fellow Africans were astonished and waited apprehensively to see what the police authorities were going to do. Those in power of course acted promptly. There were stern orders and threats, all of which my brother refused to obey. He said he had a right to keep his car where he lived, and no one would make him move it. Joseph made it clear that if anyone tried, he would bloody their noses—and he meant it.

I visited him several times and I can remember how his fellow constables found it hard to understand his stubbornness, against which the white superior officers seemed impotent. He was now nicknamed 'Chishawasha' by his colleagues in recognition of his fearlessness, which had been associated with my tribe before the Europeans arrived in the country. As far as I know, Joseph's car remained in the camp until he was transferred to Gatooma.

This story sums up his general attitude to life. He co-operated where he was convinced that his duties were consistent with law and order, but he would not carry out any command, wherever it came from, which he regarded as being stupid, undignified or unfair.

Naturally, everyone high and low in the force got to know that 'Chishawasha' would not be made to do what he did not wish to do, and many a bad report about him must have been submitted to his superiors. That he was not dismissed speaks well for those in charge of the force at this time. The Commissioner was then Colonel Morris, who had a special affection for the recruits from Chishawasha and who also aimed at the highest possible standards of training and general conduct in the police force. Until more recent times, with the rapid rise of militant African nationalism, the B.S.A. Police made the South

African Police look like a gang of lawless thugs. Many of the white recruits came from England and generally were of high quality. Morris and his team of administrators must have allowed a certain democratic atmosphere to prevail in the force, otherwise I fail to understand how my brother Joseph could have worked and qualified for his gratuity without running into trouble. As he grew older, he concerned himself with real crimes, ignoring the statutory offences connected with the pass laws. Wherever possible, he would caution people rather than bring a successful charge against them.

This was one of the most interesting periods in the history of Southern Rhodesia. With the start of the war, Huggins put the open spaces and the loyal sentiments of white Rhodesia at the disposal of the British Government. Britain decided to establish a training scheme for men and women from all parts of the Empire who enlisted for service in the Royal Air Force. And so in a very short space of time, the clear Rhodesian skies were glinting and buzzing with Halifaxes and other aeroplanes. Everywhere, even at Chishawasha Mission from time to time, handsome young white men were seen either in the conventional R.A.F. blue, or khaki uniform. Air training stations sprang into existence, such as Cranbourne and Norton near Salisbury, Thornhill in Gwelo and Heany and Kumalo in Bulawayo.

The British members of the R.A.F. were, by and large, popular with the Rhodesian African community, especially the womenfolk. This was because the majority of them seemed to take little account of the country's racial conventions. Often they deliberately set out to break the laws of segregation, and they earned our gratitude for behaving in a manner which made us feel that they were our comrades in the battle we were fighting against discrimination. For instance, these men would resist any Rhodesian police who tried to interfere with their freedom of movement, or prevent them entering black townships, fraternizing with black men or going out with black girls. Indeed, it got to a point where some of us felt that the whole structure of segregation was breaking down, because these English strangers refused to bow down to its requirements.

However, some of the escapades of the R.A.F. pilots and their ground crews into the realm of sex shocked even the most

liberal-minded Africans. Being far from their own families and sweethearts, and made suddenly aware of the transitoriness of life, many of these people lost their normal restraints. When they failed to secure women by peaceful means, they just raped them. Going about in groups, these men were capable of chasing away the husband or boyfriend of any woman and, taking her for themselves, share her. In such cases, the majority of the African women found it impossible to obtain redress. As usual, few Rhodesian magistrates or Native Commissioners were interested in the grievances of native women against white men.

A typical case about which I was told concerned a girl from the Mrewa area. On the occasion in question, somewhere in Salisbury, a car, with seven R.A.F. men, drew up alongside her. One of them got out, grabbed and pushed the woman into the car, which immediately sped off into the bush. There, they stopped at a convenient spot, where all seven men, one by one, had intercourse with her. After this mass lust was duly satiated, each man gave the woman a pound and they drove off, leaving her to find her own way back to the city.

Subsequently, the poor woman complained to the local Native Commissioner. The official asked her a number of questions, one being whether or not she had been paid for her reluctant services. On being told that she had received £7 in all, he pounced on the reward as an excuse to be rid of this awkward case. If she had accepted so much money, then she had no grounds for alleging that she had been raped. So said the Native Commissioner, and that was the end of the matter. But in the majority of cases, the Rhodesian girls, white, black and those of mixed race, were charmed by these people, who lived so dangerously and spent their money so freely.

After the war, hundreds of them were to return and settle permanently in the country, with which they had fallen deeply in love: for its pleasant climate, open spaces, the hospitality of its inhabitants and, of course, for the extraordinary privileges and opportunities that it offered anyone with a white skin. However, these same settlers were quickly to forget the ideals of freedom and justice for which they had fought Nazism and accepted most of the perverted racial laws and practices in Southern Rhodesia.

On the edge of the Harare African township the Rhodesian

Government established an internment camp, called Tanganyika, in which they kept war prisoners. At some time or other, they put enemy aliens into it, mostly Polish women. These inmates were allowed the luxury of African male servants, who did the kind of work that is beneath the dignity of white people.

I have no doubt that these women were carefully briefed on the racial doctrines of the country and the laws and penalties relating to miscegenation, but things did not work out as official white Rhodesia might have hoped. The Polish women were free of the negrophobia of white Rhodesia, and quickly found that these rules cut right across what human freedom they still had. So, like the R.A.F., they gave no thought to these racial strictures, and formed attachments with black men, especially the servants working in the camp. Thus, the Tanganyika camp soon took on the character of an international zone, where the sex law was openly flouted; it became an unofficial brothel. The camp was surrounded by a strong high fence, especially on the side separating it from the Harare township, but human ingenuity won, and the men made secret openings through the fence and came and went without being seen by the security guards, most of whom were Africans themselves and, in any case, would have been active participants in these goings-on.

Sooner or later the events in the Tanganyika camp became common knowledge in the noisy beer halls and houses of the black township, and the Rhodesian police picked up these facts. What they unmasked must have shocked and horrified many a Government official; but the news touched on the most sensitive area of the settlers' racial antipathies, and it had to be hushed up.

Nobody was able to tell me exactly what happened to the men and women who were actually caught breaking this supreme commandment of the country, but in a short space of time the Polish women were all removed and sent to a camp in Gatooma, a site far from any black township. Meanwhile the Tanganyika camp was turned over to German and Italian prisoners of war.

The Italians reversed the process and took to African women on an even larger and more honest scale than the R.A.F. did. These Mediterranean folk, with a touch of the hot African sun, fathered many children with their black concubines, much to the embarrassment of official white Rhodesia. Wherever they

were, even at Mission Stations, such as Kutama, the Italians proudly owned up to their responsibilities towards the girls with whom they were in love, leaving the die-hard settler segregationists horrified, but helpless. The Italians were already despised as soldiers; what more evidence was required to prove that they were a degenerate race?

The measure of the settlers' repugnance against the attitude of these people can be gauged by the action that the Government took at the end of the war. It decided to repatriate all the Italian prisoners of war. This was at a time when the desire for more white immigrants ran like fever in all sections of the Rhodesian European population. Some members of Parliament got up in the House and criticized the Government severely for this decision, saying that these people were not only an asset but also wished to stay as permanent settlers. To this the then Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs, Hugh Beadle, rose to say that the Italians had no racial prejudices and allowing them to live permanently in the country would result in the growth of 'coloured' children.

Thus the majority of these people were shipped back to Italy against their wishes. Some of those I had got to know were heartbroken at the prospect of being forced to leave their children and black 'wives', whom they were prepared to marry and live with.

I left for South Africa in February 1942 and did not return until the end of 1944. Returning after this absence, I noted a profound change in the general outlook of the African people, particularly the educated section. They were more militant. Many of them were especially grieved by the transfer of Sir Evelyn Baring, who was the Colony's Governor during the years I had been away. Apparently, he had struck the black people as a liberal man, and had raised the hopes of the black people. When he left the country after so short a stay my people understood that their rulers were not prepared to change their system for the foreseeable future.

The Bantu National Congress of Southern Rhodesia was stronger in membership and organization than it had ever been before. It was no longer the exclusive club of the elite, who in the past spoke more like hazy, confused religious preachers. The Africans were now fostering their own racial pride and countered the existing white brotherhood with their own black

brotherhood. I could see that we were now advancing to the point at which we would demand nothing less than black majority rule.

In August 1941 Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt had made a joint statement, the Atlantic Charter. It took some time for my people to react to the implications of its philosophy. When finally they did, the Rhodesian Africans, naturally, responded in the same way as other colonial peoples. They demanded of those in authority to know if they, the under-privileged majority, were included in the principles enshrined in this document. They wanted to know whether the Government subscribed to the spirit and the letter of the Atlantic Charter, especially the sections concerning the right of all peoples of the world for self-determination.

It took some while for my people to pin down their Government and extract a definite answer to this vital question. In due course, the then Minister for Native Affairs, one Mr Bertin, was prevailed upon to come to Harare and address an African meeting, which was attended by militant elements from the Bantu Congress.

Bertin was asked a straight question: were the black people of Rhodesia included in the principles of this Charter? His answer was equally straight, but idiotically tactless. No, he said, the natives were not the kind of people the British Prime Minister and the American President had in mind when they drew up their declaration. The words are mine, but the sense is precisely as was conveyed by Mr Bertin.

Pandemonium broke out when this shocking news spread all over black Rhodesia. The fire of indignation that Bertin had caused was still burning brightly when I returned from South Africa at the end of 1944. The Prime Minister was so upset by the inept honesty of his Minister that he relieved Bertin of his portfolio, which Huggins decided to discharge himself.

Somehow Huggins avoided making a statement on this question himself. Try as my people might to make him say something specific, the Premier dodged the issue. Unknown to us, his civil service law experts were busily framing the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, which was to be introduced soon after the war and was intended to tighten further the various restrictions imposed on us in the town areas. Only then did we get the true answer to the question

we had asked. It was then that we were to understand that our fate would in no way be included in the brave new world which Mr Churchill and President Roosevelt had promised mankind.

In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, Salisbury was described as the fastest-growing city in Africa. An unprecedented flood of white immigrants poured into the country, the majority of whom chose to live in this beautiful capital. This human influx was repeated in 1958 when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland came into being, thereby creating an enlarged market for investment, development and industrialization in Central Africa. During these periods, Salisbury expanded rapidly while its city centre became a maze of skyscrapers, plush offices, sleek shops, restaurants and hotels.

Then as now, it became difficult to imagine that here, where the nights were lit with a blaze of multi-coloured electric bulbs, once roamed (within the memory of many) herds of buffalo, elephants, giraffes and other denizens of the African bush. But it was not hard, even for the passing visitor, to see that behind this façade of beauty and affluence loomed poverty and degradation, concentrated among and exclusive to the black people.

Then the chief ghetto of the urban African was the 'native location' of Harare. Like most things to do with the administration of the African in this country, the location was conceived and perfected in white South Africa. Southern Rhodesian locations were nearly all exact replicas of those found in Johannesburg, Kimberley and Pretoria. These ghettos were established for racial, political and economic reasons.

Firstly, they ensured that white and black were physically, and, therefore socially, separate. Then they emphasized the degree of civilization attained by each of the races. Thirdly, they made control of the black people easier. This was especially important in case the natives went on strike or rioted. In the event of civil unrest, the Africans could be forced into submission by cutting off food and water supplies. Lastly, these

locations not only conferred real power on municipal councils, but also provided well-paid jobs for white men.

By creating these places and devising complicated laws for their administration, the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa made certain that they had most of the land, the wealth for its development and the social services necessary for their needs, while the Africans would remain trapped, deprived of physical freedom, proper housing, roads, sanitation or shopping facilities. As a mode of living, it was profoundly degrading.

Harare is one of the oldest African locations in Zimbabwe. It is bordered on the north by the railway line, on the south by the present white suburb of Ardbennie, on the west by the Charter Road along which the pioneers arrived, and on the east by the Mukuvisi River. The land was and still is very small in dimension and a sizeable proportion of it was set aside for church buildings and for the city's main burial ground.

The sole landlord of Harare has always been the Salisbury town council, which has remained exclusively white, a veritable hot-bed of illiberalism in African affairs. Thus the development of this black township has been painfully slow and the relationship between the governing and the governed manifestly so hostile that Harare had to be the breeding ground of the Zimbabwe black nationalism as well as of its foremost thinkers and planners.

When it was planned and the first houses built in the early days of the city of Salisbury, this place, like all locations, was intended to be just a temporary home for those Africans who cared to work for wages. Originally, perhaps this outlook was not as senseless as it might sound, for the majority of black people in early Southern Rhodesia were not enamoured of white towns, and were reluctant to become permanent dwellers in these 'white' domains. The trouble was that this notion became fixed and was enshrined in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The residents of this township not only could not own the houses where they lived, however wealthy they might become, but were also denied sufficient sanitation, streets, lights and recreational facilities. The unrepresented Hararians were entirely dependent on the whims of the city

fathers, who either said that they could not spend white Salisbury money on Harare without a lot of persuasion or that it was not worth it as this location would soon have to be removed anyway.

In the meantime, however, as each decade came and went, more and more black people chose to be wage-earners and more and more, as education spread, wished to be identified with white civilization. And so more and more Africans drifted into Salisbury, where at some time or other they were herded into the Harare location. Since 1945 other black townships have come into being and exploded into row upon row of identical, soulless, cheap houses, crowded streets and beer halls. There are Mabvuku and Mupfakose, for instance, built within the last few decades. And, of course, there is the Highfield Village Settlement, established originally in 1936 for housing Africans employed by the Government. But until the late 1960s, Harare was the biggest, the most vital and explosive black ghetto in Mashonaland, if not in all Zimbabwe.

My first impressions of Harare were gained as a result of the visit I made there with my aunts, Catherine and Josephine, some time in 1927 when I was ten. When Christmas was approaching, everybody in Chishawasha went on a shopping spree and, naturally enough, Salisbury, with its many Indian and Jewish shops catering exclusively for black people, was the obvious place to go.

Coming from Chishawasha in the east, we had to pass through the centre of Salisbury and cross the railway line from Bulawayo before we reached the outskirts of the African area. Once there, we were faced with an overcrowded, lively and noisy shanty town. It consisted of the most unsightly collection of shacks I had ever seen. These were made by the working people themselves, out of empty paraffin and petrol tins or buckets, cut up, flattened and nailed onto wooden posts, and formed the shelters where they cooked, washed, entertained, relaxed and slept through all the months and years they lived and worked in Salisbury. The structures stood very close to one another, and as the residents used wood for fuel, they were covered, particularly in the early morning and evening, in a blanket of thick smoke, which had turned them pitch-black.

There were no proper sanitary facilities: buckets and the surrounding bush served as latrines. These primitive conditions produced a strong, pervading stench, which was almost unbearable to us from Chishawasha, where the air was clean and wholesome. But the gay, talkative citizens of this tin-town showed an astonishing lack of concern about the appalling squalor around them.

There were thousands of men to a tiny number of women, which no doubt accounted for the great excitement my aunts caused wherever they went. Free from the inhibitions which they would have had in the rural areas, these boisterous boys and middle-aged men were very direct in their approach to the few women around. They hailed them as the most beautiful creatures in the world. The place where we were accommodated for the night, which belonged to a relation from Chishawasha, acted like a magnet that day: a large crowd of eager, curious men gathered round, making all kinds of flattering remarks and offering all sorts of presents to attract the attentions of my aunts.

The next day, we strolled on southwards along the Sinoia Street extension, which teemed with men on foot or bicycles. There were rows of Indian and Jewish shops and tea-rooms run mostly by Chinese and by some Africans. The street went down to *kwa Kaufmann*, that is 'Kaufman's plot', so named after its white owner, near the Catholic Church of St Peter's African Mission. The white planners had not lost sight of the importance of religion and missionary influence for this black community. Thus St Peter's was one among several Christian denominations in this particular area of Harare. They included the Presbyterian, Anglican, Dutch Reformed and the Negro-founded American Methodist Episcopal Churches. The British Methodist Mission was and still is near the railway line.

Once we had gone past *kwa Kaufmann*, we had reached the start of the location proper, which looked a great deal more orderly and less depressing than the do-it-yourself tin-compound where we had spent the previous night. At least here there existed brick houses as well as round huts made of corrugated zinc, with grass-thatched roofs. Here were proper streets, though they were untarred and full of dust. The residents enjoyed the luxury of communal lavatories, *zwimbudzi*, as they called these places, and cold shower baths. There were garbage

bins, all placed in strategic positions in the open between houses and huts. Here and there were trees, which broke the monotony of quarters that stretched exactly the same as far as the eye could see.

We did not have the time to tour the whole of this location, but after one day more took our leave of Harare. I registered certain impressions. The most striking feature was that in comparison with the ease and affluence of the white parts of Salisbury we had seen, both sections of the location were in their various ways an overpopulated bedlam of untidiness, filth and noise. The Nyasas from Nyasaland in their various tribal groupings, the Senas from Portuguese East Africa, and people from just about every other tribe in central, east and southern Africa gathered here to a greater or lesser degree. Drawn together by a common purpose, they moved in what seemed an aimless, mindless hurry. They were full of aggressive, blustering vitality, manifested by their loud voices, brashness of manner and ready inclination to sing, beat their drums and dance on the slightest pretext.

In Rhodesian towns it seems that the African is considered as a form of pollution, a menace, a hazard, to the urban settler. Of course he is accepted everywhere as a source of labour, but once he steps outside the factory gates or residence of his white master he assumes a totally different aspect. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was a magic instrument for settlers who had this attitude, for they could use it to resist the incursion of the black town dweller. From the moment it became the law of the land, any white person had the right to protest to the Government or their local authority against a plan, however necessary, for housing, a church, even a beer hall or a football pitch for African use anywhere near an area defined as 'European'. In all the years that I lived in Salisbury, this attitude, with its implicit devaluation of the African, generated the greatest heat, as more and more black men, drawn by the needs of industry, came into this fast-growing city. To my recollection there was not one single white township in this capital, Avondale, Borrowdale, Highlands, Mabelreign, Marlborough, Waterfalls, or any other, where the local citizens did not, at one time or another, rise in indignation

against some project, even a school, intended for the black people whom they employed. In the majority of cases these representations succeeded. And so plan after plan which would have made life a little better for my people was dropped. Based, as they were, on the Land Apportionment Act, these protests had to be heeded, for no city councillor or member of parliament, who wished to be re-elected, dared to show himself or herself unsympathetic to the rights of their electors enshrined in this white legal magna carta.

This whole problem fitted into no kind of logic which we could begin to understand. Even when I made that first visit to the Harare Location, young as I was, I grasped the simple fact that my people were the very sinews of white industry. There was not a single house or road in Salisbury which was built without subsidiary black labour. There was not one white person in the whole of the town who did not depend for his or her welfare on the services of the Africans, as house servants, messengers, sweepers, drivers or policemen. What this whole feudal system amounted to in practical terms was that for every new white immigrant into a town, at least two or three extra black people were required to cater for his needs, either directly or indirectly. To this extent, extra land and houses for black workers and their dependants should not have been, if reason prevailed, things to be granted out of charity. But in the prejudiced minds of the whites, these basic social amenities were simply an encouragement to my people to flood their towns. It was the paradox of white thinking in relation to the Africans. The result was that our living conditions went from bad to worse. In their debates on these matters the settlers talked about us as if we were garbage that needed to be deposited far out of reach of their eyes and nostrils. The measure of this negative approach can be judged by the fact that no new locations were undertaken by the municipality of Salisbury until after the Second World War. By then the situation had become so bewilderingly chaotic that the central Government had to use strong-arm methods to force the council into action.

On the other hand, the Africans treated, as they go on treating, Salisbury as much their town as that of the Europeans. It was an African city, built largely by their sweat and toil in their own country. As long as there were chances to obtain

jobs, they would continue to come and try to share in its prosperity. They had the same hopes and aspirations as those of the white citizens who came to it. Many of them did not care whether they lived in Harare or in the back yards of their masters. The important thing was that they had somewhere to stay. Indeed, many were born there who had no other place they could call their home.

However, it would be altogether false to try and argue that the city fathers of Salisbury were always negative, for ever blind to their civic duties and the interests of white industries which depended mostly on black labour. They were forced to admit to some degree the permanence of the African stake in this white area by undertaking some development of Harare in the 1930s and 1940s. It grew in clearly defined stages. The first portion came to be called 'Old Bricks', to the local residents *MaOld Brikisi*. This is the area stretching from Kaufmann's plot and the churches southwards, which I saw on my first visit to Harare. It was designed as a self-contained housing unit, with living quarters, administrative offices, a recreation hall, a clinic and, of course, the essential brewery and beer hall. The famous Musika, vegetable market, was to be established just behind the recreation hall, now called 'Mayi Musodzi'. Surprisingly, the white Superintendent's residence, which marked the end of this section, was built very much among the people who lived here. But later this large house was passed on to the African head of the township police force, the white Superintendent being transferred to a residence well outside the bounds of the location.

Apart from the round huts, most houses in the *MaOld Brikisi* were structurally sound, being made of red bricks, with zinc-covered roofs and verandahs. Each block consisted of four rooms, about twelve by eight feet, with open ceiling and two tiny kitchens, which, though part of the building, were accessible only from the outside and not through the living-cum-sleeping room. All the floors were of mud, as they still were when I left Harare in 1959, and the occupiers had to smear them with cow-dung to keep them clean. Built in rows, these units were detached, with a few feet separating one block from another in the same line. But there would be about twenty yards or so between one row and the next, allowing space for communal dustbins and lavatories, and the passing traffic.

In the days when the shortage of accommodation was not so acute, each room would have been allocated officially to one person. But with the ever-growing tide of men coming into the city for work, this rule went by the board and the number of legal tenants was raised to at least four, every one of whom had to register at the Superintendent's office and carry a piece of paper to prove his tenancy. However, even at the worst times, certain people, particularly the prostitutes, could get round this difficulty by bribing men in the right places.

The next stage in the development of this township was not only the building of more bachelor quarters, but also houses for married people with good character and social standing. The former were constructed immediately south of *MaOld Brikisi* and were promptly called by Africans *MaJubeki*, that is to say, Johannesburg, for the tenants in these new blocks were stigmatized with having criminal tendencies, akin to the citizens of Johannesburg. The invasion of Salisbury from the country was beginning to gather momentum. The *MaJubeki* houses were put up with a sense of urgency and were regarded as a bold solution to an increasingly challenging problem by the authorities. As a section, it grew faster than the *MaOld Brikisi* had done.

As for the married portion, the first group of houses was undertaken with some care and concern as to the moral welfare of the family life of the tenants. It would seem that the then city fathers reasoned in this way: a very special distinction had to be made between the morally clean, responsible and educated married African and the ignorant, unstable type, who was prone to forming transitory sexual relationships which were and still are called *mapoto* marriages. And so these houses were erected on the west side of the Ardbennie Road, and a respectable distance was left between the bachelors and the married residents.

The first houses in this area, built in four rows and separated from one another by roads and shady jacaranda trees, were a first class piece of work by general standards of African accommodation in Harare. They were designed as detached, self-contained cottages for each family unit, not only with the usual bedroom, lounge and kitchen arrangements but also with plenty of space at the back, front and side for a garden.

At least four of these cottages which in all amounted to

about fifty, were set aside for African nurses recruited by the City Council from South Africa to work at the maternity hospital and clinic, built and financed from the beer-hall profits, and situated a few yards north of this area. This clinic and maternity hospital cared for all the married women of Harare. The rest of these houses were allocated to men with long records of service to private employers, the municipality and the Government. Charles Mzingeli was allowed to occupy one of these cottages. Perhaps it was a way of trying to mollify him and make him feel less hostile and bitter towards the settler society.

The City Council was never to build a similar superior standard of accommodation again. As Africans poured into the town, land became scarcer and houses were built on a strictly functional basis, semi-detached, each consisting of a lounge, bedroom and kitchen, regardless of the size of the family. Most of these were built during the Second World War when the needs of the Africans were greater than they had ever been, and when the settlers were beginning to realize that the black people were going to remain in their fair city for some time.

However, since the Land Apportionment Act stipulated that all the white towns were in the 'European area', no one in authority was going to allow that the Africans had a right to Harare. Whatever the Councillors did for the Africans was done only in relation to white public opinion, which meant that progress was only permitted if it was possible to convince the settlers that Africans would make better workers as a result. It was also desirable, of course, that Harare should not make too bad an impression on European visitors who gaped at the township and its inmates as though it was a zoo.

The landlords of Harare brooked no interference from any quarter, even from the central government. They made all the major decisions affecting us. They alone could lease the houses and rooms there. They alone collected the rents and decided how these should be spent. They owned all the major enterprises in the locations, the main ones being the brewing and retailing of beer.

Under no circumstances would they permit an individual African to sublet and collect any rent from another African, let alone build himself a house. Neither would they allow private persons to buy and sell their beer for personal gain or to have a contract for maintaining any of the public services in

Harare such as garbage-collecting, or repairing the roads or houses. And, of course, until the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act of 1946 came into force, the people of Harare, who vastly outnumbered the whites in Greater Salisbury, had no elected representatives to have a say in the affairs of their township, or give their views on how the enormous revenue from the sale of native beer should be spent. Thus, while I lived there, this location, like all the others in the country, looked like one colossal slum, with practically no street lights or tarred roads, so that when it rained the highways became quagmires.

Two features about the administration of Harare need to be stressed. The first is that the money which built the houses and other necessary services did not come from the pockets of the industrialists and other white employers. This finance came from the profits made in the beer business. Under the relevant beer act, this industry is the monopoly of the local government. Thus the Salisbury City Council, with the biggest black population in the country to look after, ran a hugely profitable enterprise. The cost of the ingredients and processing, plus labour, mostly African, was minimal, and the urban African tended to have an unquenchable thirst for his beer. In the days when we were not allowed any form of alcoholic beverage other than our own native drink, made to the specifications of the white man, this municipal business faced no real competition, except from the *skokiaan* queens who traded illegally and were constantly arrested and fined.

One wonders what our conditions would have been without this source of revenue, for it was unlikely that without it we would have been provided with the few amenities that we enjoyed. In effect my people simply had to drink in order to have houses, roads, lights, clinics or any other services.

The second point to make about Harare is that after the passing of the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1934, the chances of Africans being employed in the construction of houses in their location were reduced to a minimum and later disappeared altogether. As the Act excluded the African from the definition of 'employee', it also denied him the right to undergo an apprenticeship for a skilled job. European employers now preferred white workers for the wages they were forced to pay. The Rhodesian local authorities, as employers, took the same

attitude, preferring white builders, fitters and electricians in the construction of African accommodation. Thus the black person was deprived of the right to build his own home.

It was in these and thousands of other ways that we were made to realize that we did not belong to the towns. But, naturally, there were limits to the settlers' ability to exercise effective control of our aspirations and to interpret fully the Land Apportionment Act. By allowing this great shortage of houses, amenities and employment in Harare to continue, the system forced thousands of black men and women either to live at their employers' domestic or industrial premises, or to make their own arrangements, regardless of what the law said, thus defeating the purpose of the policy of segregation. A white town Salisbury might have been in the eyes of those who ruled. It certainly was not so in reality.

The Africans were to be found in overwhelming numbers everywhere, even in the classy suburbs such as Highlands and Avondale. And they were probably exploiting the white man almost as much as he was exploiting them. Few legitimately employed Africans, particularly those in the domestic services, could truthfully say that they did not have several relations and friends, whom they housed and fed at the expense of their white masters. Few of them could deny that they cheated, lied and stole to help themselves as well as their brothers. And even in Harare, few Africans, married or not married, could claim that they did not share their houses and rooms with 'illegal' lodgers. In other words, a whole system of counter-exploitation emerged in the black community, which could not consider its behaviour wrong or immoral—for in the eyes of black people, the white man deserved what he was getting.

I went to live in Harare at the beginning of 1946. But, reared as I had been in the pleasant atmosphere of Chishawasha and the Seminary, I did not welcome the change. The township seemed to consist of all that was most undesirable in any human community. It was a place of poverty, congestion and noise; it was foundering in filth, neglect and degradation. And yet the people who lived there were generating a substantial proportion of the economic life of the country.

Now I see I could not have lived there at a more significant

moment of Rhodesian history. In fact I am grateful for this enforced decision, for otherwise I should have missed a rich experience. I had just been engaged as a journalist with African Newspapers and the township provided every opportunity an enterprising reporter might want in order to write about people and to scoop news. Unlike white Salisbury, which was so respectable as to seem dead, especially at night, Harare was vital, electric with human energy and the impulse of its people to express themselves. This location reflected the real Zimbabwe.

In order to become a registered tenant of any house or room in the location, one had to contend with a considerable amount of protocol and red tape, often including the necessity to bribe an African policeman or other local administrators. Otherwise one suffered the humiliation of days and weeks of futile visits to the registering office. But in my case there were no problems. I went straight to my uncle Vito, who was the head of the entire municipal African police in Harare and therefore next in rank to the white Superintendent. He took me to his boss at once and I was duly registered. The piece of paper given to me said that I was permitted to occupy a certain room in a certain block, which happened to be in the *MaOld Brikisi*. Subsequently, three other men, also employees of African Newspapers, were to share this twelve by eight foot room with me. It was close to the beer and recreation halls, which was extremely advantageous because this area was the very heart of social life in Harare.

The day-to-day administration of all municipal locations in Southern Rhodesia was in the hands of white men, with the impressive titles of superintendents, many of whom retained their army ranks. They were mostly ex-army officers and ex-policemen, people who were supposed to understand the mentality of the Africans and could enforce discipline with firmness and tact, while ensuring at the same time that ordinary Europeans did not come in and out of these places without strict control. While the B.S.A. Police maintained general supervision and handled criminal as well as statutory offences, each location had its own team of African policemen directly employed by its local authority. Their role was restricted to their local area and they did no more than enforce municipal regulations. In the majority of cases, they were illiterate and their salaries were a mere pittance, while their jobs were heavier and more taxing than those of the B.S.A.P. For duty uniform, they were issued

with khaki shorts and shirts, army boots, and safari hats with broad brims. To this unattractive gear was added a baton and in some cases handcuffs for dealing with aggressive characters, whom they ultimately handed over to the Government police.

Understandably, most of these officials, both black and white, behaved like tin-gods, especially in smaller places such as Umtali, Gwelo, Que Que and Marandellas. The tone of discipline in each particular township was set by the superintendents, whose attitudes to the Africans were identical to those of the Native Commissioners.

But at this time Harare was more fortunate in this respect than the other townships. The Superintendent was a Mr Stoddart, who had a long record of service. He was a gentle, kindly and liberal man. Tall, soft-spoken, he might have been a nice, obliging shopkeeper in an English town. He could not care less what the Africans did as long as they did not break municipal regulations and undermine the general administration of Harare. He had African friends, men and women, and he visited them in their homes. He would be the only white man to enjoy this right, without a written permit, which was required of every white calling on a black person living in the location.

His immediate assistant, Sergeant Vito, was one of the products of Chishawasha's famous disciplinarian Father Biehler. He had graduated from Chishawasha school with flying colours and joined the town branch of the B.S.A. Police in Salisbury. With his flair for discipline, organization and devotion to duty as taught and instilled by Biehler, Vito was promoted to the rank of a Sergeant, the highest for the black members of the force, then as now.

Somewhere in the late 1920s or early 1930s, the man who was the head of the municipal police in this African location was murdered, as it turned out by his rival, who wished to step into his shoes. The crime posed a very serious problem to the authorities in whose estimation there were not very many natives qualified to carry out such an important responsibility. They searched hard for the right man. Eventually, Sergeant Vito of the B.S.A.P. came out top of the list of likely candidates and he got the job.

Vito was one of the sons of Chidyausiku, the Shawasha nobleman who attempted to stab to death the Rev. Father

Richartz and drive out all the Jesuit priests from Chishawasha shortly before the 1896 Rebellion. But the son, by his brilliant record at Chishawasha, wiped out the memory of the crime his militant father had tried to commit at that crucial stage of Rhodesian history.

After leaving Chishawasha school, Vito gave up the Catholic faith and returned to the ways of his forebears in that he became a polygamist. A very attractive man, he married at least four wives. When I came to live in Harare he had more than nine children, mostly boys, the eldest of whom, Bernard Vito, was among the richest Africans in Salisbury, with a taxi and bus transport service, plus a farm in the Mrewa District.

Stoddart and Vito were a unique combination, perhaps the right sort of people to be in charge of an almost ungovernable section of Salisbury. When I came to know him, Stoddart was an extremely tactful person and he did nothing to offend the susceptibilities of the African people on the colour question. He was patient and simple in his approach to most of the people under his authority and did no more than was required of him by his employers.

Vito, a much stronger personality, commanded even more respect from the average Harare resident. Here was a man of whom it could be truthfully said that he kept a healthy balance between the past and the present cultural values of the Africans. Dealing with an urban society, which included the most illiterate and the most sophisticated, Vito's knowledge of men and national affairs was a real asset. He talked to all on equal terms and if he had to enforce unpopular measures, he conveyed to most people that he was merely doing his duty. He had enormous physical strength and, with training, could have become a champion boxer. Once a notorious Harare bully came to a dance in the Recreation Hall and demanded to enter free of charge. When everybody else failed to tackle him, Vito was called, but even he failed to reason with him. In the end Vito, after warning the man, lost his patience, over which he otherwise had such firm control, and knocked him senseless so that he had to be carried away on a stretcher. But ordinarily he would not use this kind of force; in fact this was the only time I saw him lose his temper. He was a valuable assistant to Mr Stoddart, who relied heavily on his wisdom and experience. But for all his responsible office, Vito's salary was not even a

quarter of the wages paid to the lowest white employee of the municipality of Salisbury.

Before and during the Second World War Stoddart and Vito wielded considerable power, but used it with wisdom and restraint. Their bosses at the Town House, as the Council chambers were called, did not interfere very much in the day-to-day running of the location. Apart from maintaining law and order, they collected rents and beer takings, issued permits to live in or to visit Harare and sorted out domestic disputes of one kind or another.

In the 1930s, especially after the I.C.U. phase, there was generally a reasonably relaxed atmosphere in Harare. This was in sharp contrast to the tensions that were to arise later. For, although the municipality of Salisbury went on pretending for as long as possible that the needs of the Africans were not pressing, Harare was in fact, as time went on, beginning to choke to death with its seething population. And although the authorities continued to maintain that the township should not be allowed to expand beyond the point at which it was possible for the police and army still to contain it in the event of civil strife, the atmosphere, by the end of the Second World War, was becoming explosive. Something had to be done.

The war marked the beginning of a new era, in which Rhodesia was to make a giant leap forward in economic development, as well as in strengthening the position of the settlers in numbers and political control. As mentioned earlier scores of white men and women, mostly from England, came for air-training in Southern Rhodesia. They liked the country and they wrote in glowing terms about it.

In 1945 many of those who had tasted life in Rhodesia during their R.A.F. cadetships turned their thoughts to my country, and decided to emigrate, in many cases bringing their families with them. Week by week, month by month and year by year from 1946 on, these people continued to arrive. Some flew in, some travelled by boat to Cape Town, Durban or Beira and then by train, car or plane to Rhodesia, while others roughed it by land all the way from East, West or North Africa. They were arriving so thick and fast that they totally dominated the news media, radio and the newspapers. They were mostly from the United Kingdom, with a fair mixture from Australia,

Canada and, of course, India, where the British raj had finally come to an end. When this influx was reinforced by white South Africans, who got excited by the prospect of the Federation's partnership policy in the 1950s, as many as sixteen to twenty thousand white immigrants were entering Rhodesia annually. Nothing like this had been known in living memory.

White Rhodesia welcomed them with open arms. For one thing, these new arrivals were redressing the balance between the tiny white minority and the hidden terror of the huge African majority. For another thing, many of these immigrants had capital and skills, which the country sorely needed to develop its resources. Also, under Huggins especially, the ruling class wished Rhodesia to evolve a distinct and unmistakable English character and not the mongrel-type that had emerged from the blend of Boer and British in South Africa.

Salisbury was probably the most advantageous place from which to observe this phenomenon. Because of its pleasant climate, its prosperity and position as the seat of Government, it claimed the largest proportion of these new citizens. The city's Councillors tried to suck every white immigrant into the town. But while they were prepared to offer every incentive to the immigrants, they could not possibly provide all the houses and attendant social services that these people demanded. Nor could the various property developers and speculators who cashed in on this booming market meet the challenge fast enough to eliminate the shortages. Interim measures had to be taken to deal with the problem. A number of hostels and encampments were constructed, the best known of which were in the Coronation Park, along the Marandellas Road and near the Imperial Tobacco Company's grading sheds and compounds. Many an immigrant was to live there for several years to come, and feel that they had been grossly neglected by the establishment, which they bitterly criticized for failing to rescue them from conditions like those of the natives.

All the same, both the Government and the Salisbury city fathers bent over backwards to serve these people and make them feel proud of their new country. Whole new, neat, gleaming suburbs and townships sprang up around the perimeter of the old Salisbury. It was at the height of this housing boom that Mr Frederick de Courcey came into the Rhodesian public eye. He presented an impressive plan to build what came to be

called the new Cerney Township, south of the city near the Hunyani River at a cost of about £20 million. Amid a blaze of press publicity the scheme got started, and a number of houses and tarred roads were built. But something went wrong and the operations came to a sudden halt. Not only did certain local businessmen lose both money and face, but also later a complicated court case ensued in England, at the end of which Mr de Courcey was sent to prison. But, except for this one fiasco, Salisbury did well out of the boom, and it was not without reason that other places, especially Bulawayo, complained and named Salisbury *Bamba Zonke*, that is to say, 'the grabber of everything'.

These new inhabitants, who also included a hotch-potch of non-English-speaking Europeans, displaced persons from all over Europe and the Iron Curtain countries, were a mixed blessing to both black and white Rhodesians. To the African they brought immediately the superficial, but nonetheless important benefits of employment and more liberal attitudes, which for a time caused some despondency among old-established settlers. Indeed, we were angered, as well as entertained, by all kinds of advice in the press from these people on how natives ought to be treated. From all sides, true-born Rhodesians gave strings of instructions, telling this new community that it was wrong, even dangerous, to 'spoil' 'Jim Fish' or 'Sixpence'. One enterprising group of patriotic Rhodesians felt so scandalized by the outlandish manners of these newcomers that it issued a special booklet, spelling out the accepted social code which governed the relationship between black and white.

But time was to show that these apostles of white supremacy could have spared themselves this apprehension. Rhodesian racialism, carefully nurtured and reinforced by some of the tightest laws and social conventions in the world, is the most catching of human fevers in the country. It was soon to be proved that the majority of these new arrivals were no more liberal than their anxious hosts. They were guilty of these racial crimes for only just as long as it took them to find a house and a job. Some took a week, a month perhaps or even half a year, but in the end they conformed to the Rhodesian way of life.

Most effective in this new injection into the country's traditional *herrenvolk* outlook was the British working-class element. Finding themselves suddenly so elevated in status,

these people wanted to experience how it felt to have someone beneath them, and swallowed the country's master-race doctrine whole, simply wallowing in its full intoxicating glory, indeed almost to the point of open hatred of the African. It was as if we and not they were the immigrants. The lower they came down the social scale, the coarser they proved to be. Particularly abominable were the lift-attendants in the skyscraper office buildings that sprouted all over the city centre. It was as if our white proletarian brethren had never known what exploitation was, and had never cried out for freedom, justice and fair wages for all the workers of the world. They joined the country's exclusively white trade unions, they fought by every possible means against black competition in their jobs and, when they had acquired citizenship, most of them voted for the political party that promised the most extreme form of native policy. They made no allowance whatsoever for the African's lack of education and other environmental shortcomings. While the old-settled Rhodesian, even the Afrikaner, often treated the black person with a measure of benevolent paternalism, these new citizens, once they had tasted the heady wine of automatic superiority, were ready to exploit my people even more than they had previously been exploited themselves.

The following experience of the early fifties is worth recounting as an illustration of some of the pinpricks we had to endure from white people like these.

On the western edge of the township called the High Field Village Settlement, which is about nine miles from the centre of Salisbury, there were four isolated cottages, since then submerged by hundreds of other housing units. These were for a long time occupied by white artisans employed by the Rhodesian Government to maintain the essential services in the village which African workmen were not allowed to perform. But in 1952 or 1953 it was decided to open the township to all classes of Africans. This meant that the white occupants of these elite quarters should vacate them and they were then leased to a chosen group of Africans who could afford the slightly higher rents charged for them. The four lucky men who got them were Jaspher Savanhu, soon to become a Federal M.P., Aidan Mwamuka, Machipisa and Murape, the last three being fairly prosperous businessmen.

The moment the white occupants heard that natives were

moving in, they decided to smash the sinks and to cut the electricity supply and wiring. They did just that.

I took over Savanhu's cottage in August 1954, as he, being a Federal M.P., had moved into one of the special flats built for the six men who represented the more than eight million black people of Central Africa in the Parliament of the Federation. For the full period he had lived in this house, Savanhu, along with his neighbours, had been without electric lights. And for about a year so was I. I had to use candles, which was expensive, inconvenient and extremely annoying because I knew, as all my friends knew, that the only reason why the power to these houses had been cut off was our colour. In the middle of my sink was a large, triangular-shaped crack, the result of what must have been a hammer bash by someone using considerable force. I checked with my neighbours and theirs too had been smashed and cracked in their centres.

At that time the Superintendent of Highfield Village Settlement was a sympathetic man. His attention was drawn to this damage and the lack of electricity, but there was nothing he could do about it. Fortunately, some time later I had the honour of being visited by a Mr Inglis, then Southern Africa correspondent of the *New York Times*, who wished to be briefed on the problems of the Federation and of Southern Rhodesia in particular. I was then Editor-in-Chief of African Newspapers and consequently often sought out by visitors to hear the point of view of the black Rhodesians. Among many topics we discussed, I outlined some of the heavy burdens we were needlessly being made to carry in our own country. I mentioned, for example, the fact that we were denied the benefit of electric light.

Mr Inglis was astounded and, after leaving me, he went to see the Chief Native Commissioner, and expressed his astonishment at the inconvenience that was so pointlessly imposed on us. Not all the previous appeals from myself and my fellow tenants had moved the Rhodesian Government, but shortly after the visit of this American journalist, we were supplied with electricity.

It is important to point out, however, that, with such a great rush of new settlers into the country immediately after the

war, white Rhodesian attitudes changed sufficiently to give rise to a sudden spurt of different political points of view. There emerged a very vocal liberal element, which derived its inspiration from the Socialist movement in Britain. These people openly campaigned for a common front between the working-class Africans and Europeans in their struggle for economic justice. The leading exponents of this revolutionary school of thought were Mrs Doris Lessing, the well-known British novelist, Nathan and Dorothy Zelter, as well as J. B. Lister and Donald McIntyre, both M.P.s. Dorothy Zelter was born in Rhodesia, while Doris Lessing had grown up in the country since the age of five. Nathan Zelter originally came from Rumania, where being a Jew he had known what it was like to belong to a feared and despised race. These men and women, together with people like Mr Oliver, a railwayman, and Mrs Beveridge, whose husband was employed by the Native Education Department, made an impressive team.

Considering the forces of reaction which confronted them, I thought that they were a brave group of people and for a time, I entertained the hope that we could work with the settlers for common goals and eventually succeed in changing the structure of our society. It was encouraging that Colonel Walker, M.P., then the Leader of the Rhodesian Labour Party, accepted the principle of African participation in politics and the trade unions. Strong efforts were made by all these white Rhodesians to achieve these goals, and Charles Mzingeli supported them wholeheartedly. At this period of Rhodesian history he was probably the most powerful and dedicated black politician and trade unionist in the country. But he was still ready to co-operate with any settlers sincere in extending the hand of friendship to their black fellow countrymen.

But the anti-black elements in the Southern Rhodesian Labour Party and white trade unions were formidable. They were led by H. H. Davies, a relentless fighter and champion of the rights of the white Rhodesian working man. Supporting him all the way was another arch-segregationist artisan by the name of Jack Keller, who represented the white railwaymen in Parliament. Davies and Keller insisted that those with African blood should be kept out of all white movements. To this end, the Congress of the Rhodesian Labour Party held at Gwelo on 20th October 1946, adopted the following resolution:

‘No member of the aboriginal tribes or races of Africa, nor any person having the blood of any of the aboriginal tribes of races of Africa, and living among and after the manner therefore shall be admitted to membership.’

That clause remained permanently in the constitution of this party, supposedly the guardians of the rights of victims of capitalist exploitation. Under the circumstances, it should not surprise anyone to learn that after a few years both the Rhodesian Labour Party and the efforts to bring about unity between black and white workers became things of the past.

While white Salisbury was gleefully saluting the arrival of new white Rhodesians, much larger numbers of black people were inviting themselves in. This peasant trek to the towns was triggered off by the demand for black labour on military aerodromes and other projects. When I returned from South Africa at the end of 1944, the movement was clearly unstoppable.

By the beginning of 1946, it had reached the proportions of a human stampede. It was as if my people were running away from some kind of a plague that had visited the peace of their reserves. And that was partly true, for apart from the attractions of urban life, Rhodesian native policy was becoming a plague itself. The Prime Minister's words and actions were spreading the bacillus of fear and insecurity everywhere among the rural Africans. Vast numbers of the Shona and Ndebele people were being forced out of their lands to make way for new immigrants and local ex-service white Rhodesians. And so the townward march from the countryside became a continuous human flood.

Unlike all previous population movements, this one embraced every kind of African. Whereas in the past it had mainly been the menfolk who had ventured into the urban areas in search of employment, this time the women joined them. The old inbred belief among the Shona that a woman's place was in the tribal kitchen far away from the vice-ridden white villages—*MaVengere*—was now laughable. Like their men, and the white people from the distant cities of Europe, our women came to stay.

Equally significant in this massive trail to Salisbury was the presence of young, educated Africans, teachers and nurses, whom Huggins, especially, had been persuading to remain in the native reserves, where they were supposed to dedicate their lives to the mission of uplifting their less privileged fellow men. The Prime Minister reasoned that in the towns the better

educated people faced white competition, which frustrated and embittered them; they could thus become dangerous tools in the hands of 'agitators', such as Charles Mzingeli. But these men and women did not feel that their role in life was to oil the wheels of the Rhodesian Government native policy. They were the intellectual elite of the Africans. Theirs was a much stronger and deeper vision of African freedom and their coming to Salisbury in such large numbers was the beginning of a new chapter in Rhodesian politics. These people would make demands that could not be satisfied by simply providing more beer and sporting facilities, the standard palliative for the urban African. Times had changed. Even as I was settling down in Harare in 1946, these voices for a fairer slice of the Rhodesian cake were rising in an increasingly menacing crescendo. In a few years' time they would be asking not for a slice, but for all of it.

Finally, these new citizens hailed not only from rural Zimbabwe, but also from neighbouring countries—Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Portuguese East Africa and even farther north and south. In a very short time, Salisbury had the biggest concentration of black people in Rhodesia, if not in all Central Africa. It became a microcosm of this part of the world, where every tribe, race, tongue, talent—and form of human madness was represented.

Probably the silliest of the many silly forms of racial prejudice encountered in Southern Rhodesia before the Second World War was the almost pathological objection most of the settlers had to being spoken to in English by a black person. Even the Native Commissioners, barring an infinitesimal minority, resisted attempts made by educated Africans to address them in their own tongue. Abuse, humiliation and even threats of physical violence were a common experience a great many of my people suffered from the farmers and civil servants with whom they had tried to converse in English.

However, the majority of immigrants who came into the country at the end of the war fortunately took a different attitude. Our languages, Sindebele and Shona, were too difficult for them to learn. Seemingly so was *Fanakalo*. Instead, these new Rhodesians generally preferred to stick to their

mother tongue, which suited the Africans perfectly because of their passionate desire for education, the best aspect of which, they felt, was learning to read, write and talk in this European language. This was an important change, and removed one of the biggest barriers between white and black, especially in the towns where people so often clashed simply because one man misunderstood what the other had said. Now some of us could at least make ourselves clear, even if we did not agree.

The class distinctions that I had seen in my tribe in Chishawasha were drawn mainly on the basis of age, authority and the extent to which a man succeeded in carrying out his social obligations. But in an urban environment, these age-old class distinctions had a different pattern, one that reflected the values of the settlers' culture. The dividing line was drawn between the *va ka funda* and *vasina ku funda*—the educated people and those who were not educated.

Because we had so few schools and most of them were only primary, it was inevitable that our society tended to exaggerate the merits of an educated man. For instance, a person who had passed Standard Six or Seven would have been considered at that time to be in the top bracket of this new superior social class. And if he had gone further and acquired a university degree in South Africa, then he could happily regard himself as of the most exclusive elite. Indeed, until 1945 Southern Rhodesia had only managed to produce two black university graduates.

Naturally enough, the rank and file Africans not only envied, but also were deeply proud of the more learned members of their race, even if in some cases their education amounted to no more than an ability to speak English fluently. These *va ka funda*, as they were called for short, were the wise ones, from whom the black community in general picked their leaders and drew their inspiration. As they could speak the white man's lingo, they were therefore supposed to understand better the workings of his mysterious mind. Thus a black person who happened to be a clerk or an interpreter in an office or factory automatically won general esteem.

But when I first came to live in Salisbury, this black European was unpopular with a lot of white employers, particularly old-established Rhodesians. He was 'cheeky', he was 'spoilt', they said. Hence, up to this stage, most of us had taken up teaching,

which meant living in rural areas where most black schools were situated.

Early in 1941 when I became disgruntled with teaching, for which I was being paid only £2 10s. per month, I applied for a clerical position at the Cam and Motor Mines near Gatooma. The white man who condescended to see me sat behind a vast desk in a vast office. The interview was a very brief one, probably one of the briefest I have had in my life. He asked me two questions, through an interpreter. One was about my tribe and the other was about the standard of my education. After I had given the answers to them, he replied, without even looking at me, that the Shona were a proud tribe and that I was over-educated. Therefore I was of no use to his establishment. This man's attitude reflected the general character of old-established Rhodesian employer, farmer, miner or town-dweller towards better educated local Africans. But when he slighted my tribe and my education and then sent me out, I felt like joining any anarchist movement committed to the destruction of everything that his establishment stood for.

Until well after the start of the last war, the average African or indeed white citizen of Salisbury would have sworn that the most educated black person in the whole country was Mr Janhi. This reputation was founded in the fact that he was then the leading court interpreter in Rhodesia. Janhi not only had a remarkable grasp of the law, but also spoke excellent English. Upon his knowledge and professional integrity depended the ultimate fate of any African accused of a serious crime, such as murder or the rape of a white woman, both of which were punishable by death or a life sentence. Indeed the role that this African played was almost as important as that played by the judges who pronounced the final verdict. A murder might have resulted from witchcraft or ritual tribal practices, and translation was no easy task in this country where the black and the white cultures conflicted so violently on practically every level. What meant one thing in an African language could, if translated literally, mean quite another thing in English. Besides, the psychology of the ordinary tribesman, particularly if he came from remote parts of the country, was not something that even a wise and scrupulously fair judge or magistrate could honestly claim to understand fully. But Janhi, being an African and clever, possessed this essential qualification. He also

understood the Rhodesian system of jurisprudence. Little wonder then that, to those who did not know that all Janhi had had was a primary school education at Chishawasha, he was, until well after the war, considered the most academically sophisticated black person in the entire country.

As I remember him, Janhi was a medium-height man, who usually dressed in well-pressed khaki or light-weight summer suits and rode a somewhat ill-used bicycle, to whose frame was fixed a big bag where he put his groceries and the bottles of European liquor that he was reputedly fond of; but because he was so much a part of the legal establishment no policeman, black or white, dared to arrest him for this offence, for it was a fact that every judge, magistrate and police commissioner in the country knew him personally. In general he was an unostentatious man, but in court, Janhi behaved like a highly confident, masterly stage manager, fully aware that the success or failure of any particular criminal dramatic production depended solely on his performance. He spoke with a clear, well-modulated voice and had a precise pronunciation. He had the habit of pacing backwards and forwards, with his ears cocked either to the chap in the box or the legal presence on the bench, and sometimes he even took an inquisitorial role himself. Any accused or witness who said something fatuous was sharply brought into line by Janhi's quick tongue. White men who tried to put on superior airs in court were acidly told that they were in the sphere of the law and not in the streets or out on their farms. Terms such as 'this native', 'this boy', rattled Janhi and he ordered this or that settler to use the accepted legal phraseology, such as 'the accused' or 'this witness'. Outside the courts he behaved in a manner which made it difficult for anyone to expect favour or friendship from him.

Janhi's significance is that he was regarded by the old white establishment in pre-Second World War Rhodesia as the ideal type of an educated 'native', intelligent, but servile to their authority, on top of which he was such an essential element in the smooth administration of their justice. Consequently, he was not only esteemed by them, but also given a large measure of immunity to the multifarious legal restrictions imposed on the majority of urban Africans, if only to remind them that the towns did not belong to them.

However, the post-war industrialists and investors from South Africa, Britain and Europe generally changed this paternalistic criterion of an educated black man. Because they were primarily interested in profits rather than the finer points of the policy of segregation, banks, insurance companies, manufacturing, newspaper, motor and other big business organizations looked for Africans who could enhance their efficiency, productive capacity and the local consumer market. Thus, these institutions greatly, if indirectly, undermined Huggins' pet philosophy that, because they were a potential source of trouble through frustration, most educated Africans should be given no encouragement to have a stake in the towns.

So it was inevitable that in due course what educated Africans there were should, like all the others, be drawn into towns, and Salisbury of course attracted the greatest number of them. In the late 1950s and early 1960s when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was a going concern, Salisbury had more African politicians, doctors and various other intellectuals than any other town in the British Central African territories.

Any white person who came in immediately received the freedom of the city of Salisbury, so to speak. Unless he was a tramp or a criminal, he could move and live anywhere he liked: in hotels, boarding houses, with his friends or relations, he could buy or build himself a house of any size, depending entirely on his economic circumstances. His brains, his skills and his money were required everywhere and brought him handsome returns. His children could go to any school in the country. The banks and other financial institutions, let alone the local industries and professions, were prepared to give him all the help and facilities he needed to make a decent start in the city, with its swimming pools, golf courses, parks, bars and restaurants. Indeed, to fail in this environment a white man had to have the brains of an ox.

But the moment an African entered the town, he was a foreigner. Technically, he had to report immediately to the local authorities, to obtain their written permission to look for work or stay for a limited period. The police saw to it that he did not loiter in the white areas, especially during the curfew hours, or cause noise or any inconvenience to European

citizens. At the local pass offices, near the city's municipal market, on any day of the week, except Sunday, there were hundreds of black people milling around for passes to seek work or to be allowed to stay in Salisbury while shopping or seeing their relations. Equally, at the local police station there were countless Africans waiting to be charged for all kinds of technical offences, including being found in what the law defined as wrong places for an African. In this way the state squeezed huge revenues from the native people, whose income was the lowest in the country. No lodging houses or hotels took Africans, other than as servants. No white restaurant would even serve a cup of tea to a black person. Except for one or two places near the Kopje area, there were no public toilets for Africans in all the city centre. The schools in Harare, at this stage mostly run by the churches, were very few and very crude, so that the majority of the African children went without any form of education.

However, the Africans were not deterred by these and other harsh aspects of this system. They came in like an army of occupation and took over not only Harare, but also the backyards of the whole of white Salisbury. Whatever the country's native policy said, these people were sorely needed: by white industry and the white insistence on living in a style suited to a superior position. The Rhodesian industrial boom was hungry for cheap native labour and it devoured the Africans just as soon as they reached the city. Big concerns, such as Imperial Tobacco Company, Mashonaland Tobacco Company and Gallaher, for instance, employed hundreds, men, women and in many cases juveniles. But Africans were not only wanted as factory and office hands. They were also taken on to cook, to wash cups and saucers and to water the flowers in plush residential gardens. The law could not decide for the individual European how many servants he should have. Neither could it successfully convince him that it was desirable, in the interests of the white community as a whole, to restrict the number of black people living in his back yard. His comfort and ease were paramount. Even if he tried to do so he could not possibly keep a precise tag on his black employees, for they had enough wits to house and feed their many relations at his expense.

In other words, and in many respects the Land Apportion-

ment Act was not worth the paper it was written on, and quite failed to keep the black people in their *bundu*—the bush. Salisbury became even less a white city only. There were far more Africans living in the white suburbs than the privileged folk who actually owned them, for the city did not have enough space in Harare to accommodate even the lawfully employed native people. For a time Africans and their employers stopped worrying about the law and tried to solve the housing shortage in their own way. Black slums sprang up all over, constructed of the simplest and cheapest materials: poles and dagga, grass and tins, tied and nailed together to form some sort of shelter, just like the hovels I had seen during my first visit to Harare in the late 1920s. And, of course, wherever Africans congregated they were noisy and unhygienic: they liked to live naturally.

The most notorious of these human congregations flourished just across the Mukuvisi River, south of Salisbury and less than one mile east of St Peter's Catholic Mission in Harare. It is now what is called the Light Industrial Sites, adjacent to Arcadia, the suburb reserved only for people of mixed blood, but it started the war as a brick-making area. With the increase in the white population, the production of bricks accelerated, so that during the war this spot became the centre of one of the busiest specialized industries in the whole of commercial Salisbury. Correspondingly, it required and attracted a very large force of African labourers, many of them being allowed to make whatever living arrangements they could on the site; and they did, with their usual knack for improvisation and for living as fully as they could.

According to the thinking of white Salisbury, these brick-makers, like other Africans elsewhere in the city, could get their beer and entertainment in their ghetto, Harare. This was possible, but besides being inadequate and restricted by the drinking hours, the approved beer in Harare did not have enough kick in it to satisfy the majority of hardened boozers. More than that, as the wages of most Africans did not begin to cover the barest necessities, some of them devised means of supplementing their income. In any case, having your beer freely, at any time and with whomever you liked was an essential part of that individual freedom that everyone looked for. And then there was in every African that recurring desire flout the system that bore down so heavily on his people.

The final outcome was that in these very brick-fields, with their kilns, gaping earth holes and shacks, was born one of the most flourishing illegal beer-brewing industries in the country. The brewers were usually prostitutes, fearless, unscrupulous and with wonderfully shrewd business minds, whose hardened outlook enabled them to cope with violent customers as well as the police. They made what was called *skokiaan*, a word of Johannesburg African derivation, where the process was invented. The mixture consisted of yeast, maize meal and sugar to start with, but to it was added such ingredients as methylated spirits, tobacco and even boot-polish, which greatly increased its punch.

Skokiaan was being made everywhere in the urban centres of Rhodesia. But this particular place topped them all in production and notoriety. Taking advantage of the proximity of Harare and the secondary industries south of the city, with their thousands of residents and workers, the *skokiaan* queens, as they were christened, at one time made enough of this concoction to buy themselves cars, farms and to put their children through expensive schools from the proceeds. The profits were enormous, but the risks, in arrests and fines, were just as great.

The peak period of its prosperity was from about 1944 to 1948. It was during the war that the Africans of Salisbury, with a, in this case distorted, sense of humour, called it 'Poland'. They had read of the hellish chaos created by the Germans when they bombed Warsaw. The events happening in this heart of the *skokiaan* enterprise were chaotic when police raids were made. These occurred at almost any time, but particularly at sunset when, often, nearly three-quarters of the compulsive drinkers from Harare congregated here; at that time of day, the official beer halls would be closed. Then all hell would be let loose; scores of policemen and patrons fought, fell and scattered in all directions, some injuring themselves in the holes or on the piles of bricks. It was difficult for the police to arrest the manufacturers, because they did their trade in the open and disappeared into the crowds as soon as there was a sign of danger. The best that they could do was tip over the containers and let spill all the *skokiaan* they found abandoned.

As a newspaper reporter, I witnessed many such incidents and I had to agree that the name Poland was not altogether

inappropriate. But I did not have to mingle with these crowds, it being quite enough to stand on the Harare side of the Mukuvisi River to see men, women, the police, and their Land-Rovers, hats and batons flying all over the place in what amounted to small but intense battle engagements.

I saw this conflict between my people and the law as an important sign of the bigger struggle between the ruling minority, whose will was paramount, and the majority, who wanted to break their chains. But taken in its local context, the struggle showed a mixture of courage, defiance and group-mockery on the one hand, and fear, cowardice and animal behaviour on the other. Although they took such great risks, these people were not sufficiently aroused to commit bloody violence against the police, whose behaviour often seemed to show a touch of masochistic excitement in these scuffles. At any rate there was seldom bloodshed, although while the confusion lasted you expected that things might go that far.

The next day, the unfortunate black souls arrested would be hauled before the courts, where the usual fines or prison sentences were imposed. As usual the magistrates would warn the guilty not to flout the laws of the country. But experience showed afterwards that few of my people really took any account of their moralizing attitudes. In fact, this industry went from strength to strength in direct proportion to the numbers of my people coming into Salisbury.

I certainly did not approve of *skokiaan* brewing and drinking. It was highly poisonous, as the makers of the brew tried to give it more and more kick. It burnt the internal organs, such as the liver, making those who drank it consistently change the colour of their faces. Many died suddenly, while others were permanently impaired physically and mentally. Although it benefited the *skokiaan* queens and their families financially, it left the patrons without the money to buy the necessities of life.

The Harare Location also had its own *skokiaan* problem, but this was limited in comparison with Poland, because the township was more closely supervised. However, because it was the only location where the ordinary Africans outside Government service could have registered accommodation, its problems were different.

Immediately I became a resident of Harare, the first ugly feature of its segregated existence that hit me was overcrowding. I have seen this in London, in other European and American cities. I have also seen poverty and brutalization of people in these white countries. But again the poverty and brutalization of those I was going to live with in Harare were of a very different kind. These were deeper. These were racial.

As I have said already, the twelve by eight-foot room I was allowed to occupy in Harare was eventually shared by four men. We were in fact what is today called African middle-class, and each one of us looked to live in conditions of more privacy, space and better sanitation. But the law classified us as 'natives' and so we were not expected to be treated, let alone live according to the rules of the capitalist system of white Rhodesia.

A Native is any member of the aboriginal tribes or races of Africa, or any person having the blood of any of the aboriginal tribes or races of Africa, and living among and after the manner thereof.

This was the official definition of a black person under the Land Apportionment Act. The African Press had to struggle for many years before it succeeded in convincing the settlers that the term 'African' was the proper name to use in reference to a person of local origin. Even so, this description remained on the statute books of Rhodesia.

In the day-to-day life of the average African this word 'native' carried awful connotations: it was like being called a pig, a dog, it was some kind of a licence giving any white man the right to behave as he liked towards a black person. Many laws specifically said 'the native' shall not be allowed to live here or there, shall not be accorded this or that privilege and may not do this or that. 'Native' was indeed a fateful word.

But at some point in the late 1940s there arose some confusion about this definition among the civil servants who enforced segregation. The point was that under this ruling, a person of mixed blood could be exempted from the limitations imposed on Africans if he chose not 'to live after the manner thereof'. Some more liberal officials in Salisbury thought that an educated African, though 'of pure native blood', qualified for this exemption, especially in regard to residential accom-

modation, liquor and pass laws. The Huggins' Cabinet was alarmed by this liberal interpretation, so much so that the then Minister of Justice, Hugh Beadle, got up in the House to say that anybody who was of 'pure' Negro blood was a native and would always remain so. That meant that whatever your intellectual, financial or professional status, you had to live among the tribes and after their manner. In the long run, this benefitted African society as a whole, because it helped us to forge a common political conscience, instead of being saddled with a privileged class of people, who were only interested in preserving their status and material possessions. But at the same time a great many educated and wealthy Africans resented this levelling down intensely. I was one of them.

Four was the official maximum number of people permitted to occupy any single room in the *MaOld Brikisi* and the *MaJubeki*. If this regulation had been strictly adhered to by everyone, the situation would not have been as unjust and depressing as it actually was. But not everyone could find accommodation in white back yards, at factory sites or in the various do-it-yourself compounds that sprouted up like gypsy camps all around the city's perimeter. For a great many people, therefore, Harare was the only place to come to, in spite of its shortage of accommodation. Tribal law, for a start, demanded that the more fortunate should share what they had with their less privileged relations and friends. And in the second place, in this intensely capitalist order, many Harare residents felt that they could do with the money from the unregistered tenants who were prepared to pay for sharing their rooms.

So the registered inhabitants of this township threw their doors wide open to their unauthorized brothers, sisters, cousins and anybody else in need. If statistics had been correctly and truthfully compiled, it would have been shown that the illegal tenants probably outnumbered the lawful ones by five or more to one.

The outcome of this scramble was that Harare simply groaned and heaved with the sheer weight of its human load. Rooms meant for four persons were occupied by as many as six or more. Some slept in the tiny kitchens, others on the verandahs, which were covered by hessian sacks, tins or planks. Some people slept in buses, lorries and on the open fruit and vegetable market in the location.

Naturally some of the old and respected tribal customs were lost in this kind of existence. At home it would have been inconceivable for parents to share the same rooms, let alone sleeping arrangements, with their sons or daughters-in-law. The custom went overboard. In fact the distinction made between single and married houses became a mere paper theory. Men, women and children were thrown together willy-nilly, using the same beds and blankets, without worrying about the strictures of tribal social rules. Thus it was inevitable that many thousands of children living under these conditions heard or saw their adults making love, gambling, swearing, stealing and reeling drunk.

Once upon a time, the professional prostitute had probably been the most favoured person in Harare. Particularly in the *MaOld Brikisi*, she could acquire a room and a kitchen all to herself or use her influence in this respect to get her close friends housed. This advantage vanished. There were just not enough rooms to go round. Besides, thousands of other women, virtuous, permissive or prostitutes, were descending on Harare and this privilege could not be granted or bought as easily as it had been in the past without some other person with a better claim reporting it to the appropriate authority.

We at African Newspapers recognized that the Harare location was our main source of news, and so we trained our journalistic guns on this human scene. We were praised by everybody when we put in print the good sides of its life: the beauty and flower-gardening contests, sporting meetings, increased beer supplies and other paternalistic gestures made from time to time by the administering officials to create a sense of pride in the residents in their location. Indeed, once it was realized that the African Press could clearly mirror life in Harare, everybody, except the most incompetent public servants, went out of their way to invite us to cover anything of importance in Harare.

But our responsibility, we felt, went wider and deeper than that. We were deeply concerned at the congestion of our down-trodden people, by their degenerating social environment, by disease, crime and vice. We made news reports of these facts and we often backed them with editorial comments, saying that not only was this immoral, it was also an indictment against those who ran Harare and the country as a whole. And we

always added the rider: that what hurt the Africans would in the long run hurt the white man.

Our people were grateful, but not so those in power. They merely used our crusade as an excuse to impose more restrictions on our people. In fact, the municipal police in Harare under Sergeant Vito were given orders to go round all the single quarters and clean out of them all the unregistered tenants. The orders were carried out in military style. Starting at about four o'clock in the morning, the police went round house by house, room by room, arresting all the men and women who did not possess the precious tenancy papers. Hundreds of people were drawn into the net. At eight o'clock that day, which in Rhodesia is the time when people start work, there was a milling crowd outside the Superintendent's office.

The Superintendent, with Sergeant Vito interpreting, explained the new policy and warned these hapless men and women not to be found again living in the municipal houses for which they were not registered occupiers. Next time they would be prosecuted and fined, they were told.

Stoddart and Sergeant Vito did not look a very happy pair. I had the distinct impression that neither one nor the other went along with this form of persecution, for they realized that the congestion was not the Africans' fault. Besides, they wanted peaceful, friendly residents and not enemies.

This first raid and those that followed provoked indescribable indignation all over Harare among all classes of Africans, and actually drove thousands of men and women into the fold of the Reformed I.C.U. Charles Mzingeli was to ascend to the very pinnacles of power and popularity in Harare because he took up the challenge and resisted all these injustices.

There was plenty of land everywhere. The shortage of accommodation for my people in Harare and other urban centres in the country need not have become the complex, almost insoluble problem it was. Many employers, particularly the big companies, were prepared to assist directly in the solution of the African accommodation problem. They were ready to put up houses in Harare and everywhere else permitted by law for their African employees. Mr Reedman, a shrewd property-developer who built the Marlborough white township north of Salisbury, begged and pleaded for permission to construct any number of houses in Harare. But the Salisbury city

fathers, led by the notorious segregationist, Mr Charles Olley, would not entertain the thought of letting private enterprise have business interests in their black ghetto. Wealthy Africans wished to build houses for themselves as well as for their less affluent fellow men, but the Land Act said no 'native' was permitted to buy, own, let alone build himself a house in a European area—all Harare was white property. And so they, too, could not help to ease the crisis. With all their means, they too had to queue for permits to acquire rooms or houses for themselves and their families.

However, the influx of Africans into Salisbury was a development which Huggins had long anticipated. In 1944 he had already gone so far as to ask Parliament for powers to compel town councils to set aside African urban areas as originally intended under the Land Apportionment Act. He had instructed his law experts to draft the necessary legislation and waited for the appropriate time to get Parliament to endorse it. He knew very well that he would run the gauntlet of African opposition to this law because its main intent was to force as many black people as possible out of the white residential areas. He also knew the attitude of the local authorities that 'natives' should be housed as far away as possible from their towns, and by the Government, not by themselves.

When the war was over, Huggins was determined to go through with his plans. Early in 1946 he made public the details of the Bill. The whole country was shocked by its implications. All Harare, followed by other towns, was stung into a volcanic rage, which we shall deal with in a separate chapter. But the Prime Minister was not to be swayed by African opinion, nor, in this case, by local councillors in the municipal chambers of Rhodesian towns. That very year the Bill went through Parliament and was put on the Statute Book of the country as the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act.

Given the unalterable nature of the segregation system and the chaos reigning in the field of African accommodation, it had its good points. When finally it was implemented, the Act forced the Salisbury city fathers not only to release more land and put up more houses in Harare, but also to buy the Donny-

brook farm, twelve miles outside the city, on the left-hand side of the Marandellas Road, where a whole new township, Mabvuku, came into being.

Immediately south of Harare, that is, between it and the white Ardbennie suburb, there were thousands of acres of empty land. A portion of this area was reluctantly assigned to Harare. In about 1948 the National Building and Housing Board, especially created to tackle this problem for both black and white, came in and constructed thousands of semi-detached housing units. In a very few years, this portion was covered with simple, functional houses, made of cement and asbestos, all looking exactly the same. It stretched all the way from the west bank of Mukuvisi River to the very edge of Charter Road which divides Harare from the heavy industrial sites to the west.

The African people simply called it 'National', after the Board which accomplished this feat with such breathtaking speed and efficiency. At the same time a group of white Anglican women, under Miss Barbara Tredgold, established themselves on the top of the hill near Charter Road on the National side. This was called *Runyararo*, meaning 'peace' in Shona. Indeed, the African houses around here were also referred to as *ku Runyararo*. In view of the character of Harare, especially as the political mood of the people grew uglier, one would have thought this was somewhat a misnomer.

The magnitude of the housing problem is shown by the fact that every one of these houses was occupied as soon as it was officially opened. Thousands of people moved in, including their many relations and friends, who otherwise did not exist on the books of the administrators. And even then, these new houses and those at Mabvuku were merely scratching the surface of the problem. Soon after I had moved to the Highfield Village Settlement in 1954, a similar scheme was undertaken there by the National Building and Housing Board; hundreds of semi-detached houses were put up with the same speed and were filled with double or treble the number of people they were originally intended for. Still the problem was far from being solved.

Until they had learned otherwise, the hard way, the majority of the white citizens of Salisbury regarded Harare as no more

than a dark shadow on the map of their fair city. The place we had to think of as our home was seen by the white folk who gave it any thought as a nest of crime, vice and disease, and in many ways it was.

Under the Land Apportionment Act, all white persons, except those employed by the City Council, the police or the Church, were barred from entering Harare without the written permission of the Superintendent. Naturally, not many white people wished to go through the rigmarole of applying for entry permits, even if their reasons were considered legitimate. The apparent motive for imposing these restrictions was not only to sustain racial segregation, but also to ensure that 'undesirable' white men and women did not circulate in Harare: they might be those without racial prejudices, they might put guns and 'European' liquor into the hands of Africans, or even organize sex orgies or political plots. Few settlers wished to invite this kind of suspicion, for the consequences of such 'anti-social' habits could be disastrous to their prospects in the country.

If they were not born Rhodesians they took the risk of being deported, or they could become the targets of smear-campaigns and be ostracized socially. A well-educated white woman who was found living with an African as his mistress in 'Poland' in the late 1940s or early 1950s was sent to prison for about six months. The support of Father Henry Swift, S.J., the parish priest of St Peter's Harare Mission, did not help her. A white journalist, one of the new immigrants, who fell in love with a well-known Harare African girl, was quickly deported before he could marry and take her with him to England, as he desperately tried to do. When the Special Branch officers told him that he was to be sent out of the country, he immediately made arrangements for a registry office marriage at the Native Department in Salisbury. But the Native Commissioner, knowing that under tribal law any African woman was a perpetual minor, got at her father, whom he intimidated, so that he would not give his consent for the marriage. The fiancée appealed to Charles Mzingeli for his intervention. But just as Mzingeli was marshalling his facts in order to fight for the rights of this couple, the girl was whipped away by detectives to another part of the country, while the journalist was flown out to England before the marriage could take place.

Perhaps the late Mrs Gladys Maarsdorp suffered more than

most of the other white liberals in Salisbury from smear-campaigns which were rife during these pre-partnership years. She was slandered, libelled and pilloried in letters as well as through social circles, especially during local council elections. The 'crime' for which this courageous South African-born woman was harassed was that of demanding a better life for the people of Harare. Her fellow councillors wanted her to keep silent about the overcrowding, poverty and general deprivation in the wealthiest city in Rhodesia.

On the other hand, influential white Rhodesians, who did not share Mrs Maarsdorp's sensitive conscience, were not treated the way she was. One councillor, now dead, treated Harare as though it was his private brothel. Having acquired the taste for black women, he could not resist the temptation to sneak into Harare at sunset to pick up one or other of his numerous girlfriends. He was so notorious in Harare that we called him *Mukuwasha*, that is to say brother or son-in-law. I saw him any number of times driving in alone and out again in company with one of his girls, usually well-known prostitutes in the township. He was a businessman, probably one of the richest. The joke in Harare was that these women demanded to be paid for their services in new bicycles and those I knew always possessed some of the newest and most expensive lady's models. The police and other white people knew about his activities, but because he was an influential man with extreme right-wing views on blacks he was protected against legal proceedings or the usual mud-slinging.

This particular case shows how as long as a European publicly held the accepted opinions on the 'natives', he was more or less at liberty to behave as he liked towards them in private. Others like him also used Harare as a source of easy women or to dispose of their second-hand cars and clothes. These people did not care about the entry permit system. As a matter of fact, many white people slept regularly in Harare, for under cover of darkness it was simply not possible for the police to ensure strict observance of the Land Apportionment Act. The same would apply to the white area as regards African lodgers or suitors.

However, it is still true to say that the policy of keeping the black and white citizens of Salisbury physically and psychologically separate and therefore ignorant of one another was

fairly effective while it lasted. The whites knew precious little of our ordinary human aspirations and deprivations. We were not allowed to attend white cinemas, theatrical productions and anything else of a cultural nature other than the occasional circus show. Vice versa our very thriving artistic and musical groups were confined to Harare and not permitted to entertain non-black audiences either in our township or in the white area.

Thus, speaking in general terms, our community life was a closed book to those for whom we toiled and sweated every day. This meant that our plight could not be appreciated by the majority of those who were priding themselves on their special mission of civilizing us. Some Europeans did not even have the most elementary knowledge about the legal boundaries of the relationship between us and them. Once, for instance, I organized a fairly lavish musical evening at 'Runyararo' at which the fabulous black Manhattan Brothers from Johannesburg were performing. A large number of white people turned up. But the City's Native Administration Department had heard in advance that Europeans were likely to patronize the show, and they sent someone to stand outside the Runyararo Hall to keep them out. A European woman who was told that she could not be admitted asked in all innocence why not. On being informed that this was what the Land Apportionment Act decreed, she was genuinely shocked and remarked, with disgust, 'What a silly law!' Apparently she had never heard of this, the most important commandment in all Rhodesia.

This position meant that the City Council could get away with inexcusable negligence. For instance, until political riots and the destruction of property that went with them became frequent occurrences in Harare in the late 1950s, most of Harare was without street lights; and they were finally installed only because they would help the security forces in dealing with such incidents. In all the nine years I lived in Harare there were only about seven tarred roads. The rest were made of gravel and riddled with pot-holes, which, in the rainy season, turned into muddy pools of water, which trapped cars, lorries and bicycles.

It was largely through the dramatic events stirred up by the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act

of 1946 that the authorities grudgingly decided to give our area an air of respectability by calling it the Harare African Township. Otherwise, since its establishment, it had always been referred to as the Salisbury native location, like all municipal African dwelling places throughout Southern Rhodesia. This impersonal traditional name was offensive to a great many Africans, who saw it as a deliberate effort by the whites to emphasize our subhuman status. The new label 'Township' went some way to appease this wounded pride.

The geography of Harare was, and still is, very simple. Travelling from Salisbury, one crossed the railway line and moved along the broad Charter Road, on the left side of which lies the main cemetery of the city. Between the end of this cemetery and Harare's B.S.A. Police Station there branched off from the Charter Road a narrower one called the Ardbennie Road, which led to the white township of that name, about two miles to the south. From this road passing Europeans could have an appreciable glimpse of the area where their 'boys' were housed. To a new arrival or a tourist, the spectacle of this township would have been unedifying, but to most local Europeans, it was an acceptable, almost a natural order of things. If the township had just been the scene of a riot of a mass protest meeting, few white people would be foolish enough to pass through Harare. The B.S.A. Police, always on the alert where the safety of white people was in jeopardy, would have dissuaded them from entering this 'dangerous' area or actually escorted them out. In this case they would drive farther along Charter Road until they came to another branch road, just past what is now called Beatrice Cottages, occupied by slightly more favoured Africans. This route avoids Harare almost altogether.

But if Harare was quiet, the Ardbennie Road would be the shortest way to the Ardbennie white suburb, and passers-by would have seen on their left an all-pervading filth that defied description: pools of muddy, slimy water, smoke-dirtied tin-built attachments contrived to serve as kitchens or extra bedrooms, bicycles in various degrees of decrepitude leaning against the houses, and rags, blankets and washing fluttering all over the place.

This offensive monotony was broken some distance farther down by the beer garden, the Superintendent's Office, the

Recreation Hall and the vegetable, fruit and firewood market, with about eight tiny African-owned grocery, butchery and general stalls. It was a compressed area, full of life, where all kinds of goods, including live chickens, were on sale and where all important events seemed to be concentrated. It was simply called locally, *Musika*, a market.

After this scene of jostling, singing, talking, cycling, motoring people, *MaOld Brikisi* was left behind and there emerged the beginnings of *MaJubeki*, which looked less overcrowded and higgledy-piggledy. This section terminated at a football pitch. And beyond the football ground was a complex of bachelor hostels built somewhere between 1947 and 1948, and occupied by municipal labourers, some of the most illiterate and undisciplined residents. Then the married quarters, hitherto all on the right-hand side of the Ardbennie Road, spilt over to the left as well. These stretched all the way to the barbed wire fence, a little farther south, which separated Harare from the white people.

By car, the whole distance, from the top of *MaOld Brikisi* to the barbed wire fence, would have taken about twenty minutes, driving slowly. Motoring could be hazardous in a township so choked with people, some very drunk—and on bicycles. Eastwards the single quarters almost touched the nearby Mukuvisi River, while westwards the married quarters stretched from the Ardbennie Road to about two hundred yards before the famous Charter Road. If one travelled along this Charter Road, especially in the morning just before office hours or in the evening just after work, one would see a bewildering number of black men on foot, on bicycles or in cars, rushing from or to Harare. These people were extroverts, vividly expressing their various feelings, talking and laughing loudly as though they were completely in tune with the amplitude of the sunshine and the cloudless skies above them. Perhaps it was from this characteristically joyful exterior of the black people that the settlers conceived the naïve idea that their Africans were ‘happy’ under white rule. Their smiling faces certainly gave an unsuspecting visitor no impression that they were locked in a grim struggle for economic wages, decent houses to live in, security of tenure and even women to marry.

This then was the Harare African Township, geographically a tiny concentration of houses, rough roads, one untended park,

one cinema-cum-recreation hall and, in due course, three Government schools. In it lived during my time a black population which was probably five times that of the whites in Salisbury.

After living first in *MaOld Brikisi* and then *MaJubeki*, by about the middle of 1947 I was given a house, because I had got married. In the early 1950s, we moved to near Runyararo, occupying one of the new houses in the 'National'. In 1954 we took leave of Harare for the Highfield Village Settlement, about four miles away.

These nine years in the Harare African Township were undoubtedly some of the most interesting times in my life. They were probably the most valuable in the experience and knowledge I gained about my people and the psychological effects of the social, economic and political burdens they laboured under. The life here was at once miserable and intensely exciting. It was a regimented existence, in which each person's movements, income, opinions and even visitors, and of course drink, interested the big white brother.

However, compelled to live the way we did, we yet managed to build our own immunities against the oppressive forces designed to make us respect the laws we loathed. We were forced to discard tribal considerations and therefore were freed from the inhibiting influences of tribal chiefs, customs and family connections. Each person was a separate individual within the group, whose corporate commitment was to find the means not only to survive, but also to throw off the yoke of economic, social and political deprivation.

Women were the most underprivileged members of this community. Originally, Harare was not intended for respectably married people, but for that type of 'native' who kept his wife and kids somewhere in the reserve of his birth. Hence the first section of Harare, *MaOld Brikisi*, consisted only of single-roomed houses and it was hoped that this would prevent the 'native' from having his wife and rows of piccaninnies in the area. But it was not long before the black woman forced herself where she was not officially wanted.

These women were, to start with, single people looking for either husbands or opportunities to work and so fend for themselves outside the very constricting tribal environment in the rural areas. But they found themselves neither wanted by nor prepared for white employment, added to which ideal husbands were not easy to come by. Inevitably, they turned to prostitution and that is how this profession started all over the urban and mining centres of Southern Rhodesia.

Logically enough, Harare, with its teeming numbers of unattached black men, proved a fertile ground for its growth. As far as the Europeans, especially those in the administration, were concerned, this was a blessing in disguise, for it safeguarded the chastity of white womanhood from the lust of their male native servants. Indeed, between the wars, professional prostitutes in Harare seemed to enjoy some sort of official recognition. They acquired rooms as easily as legitimately employed male workers. In some cases, they had more hold on local officials and location police than had the ordinary masculine employee. They were in such great demand. And this was because, due to tribal traditions, the African urban society continued to be overwhelmingly masculine. Certainly before the Second World War, the proportion would have been anything from fifty to one hundred men to one woman. After

the war the position improved, but on nothing like the scale sociologists would regard as a healthy balance.

One of the best known and most powerful ladies of this vintage was a MuShawasha from Chishawasha Mission. Her name was Margaret, the daughter of one of the most influential noblemen of his time in my tribe. He fought with distinction against the settlers in the 1896 Rebellion. And his was a remarkably brainy family, of whom Margaret was probably the cleverest. But something went wrong with the Church marriage of Margaret. She left Chishawasha and settled in the Harare Native Location where, to the great horror of most members of the tribe, she took up professional prostitution. Yet when I came to know her in the late 1920s, she was all the same a figure of considerable social standing in Harare. She remained deeply proud of her background, and at the same time took an honest, unashamed view of what she did. This candour, plus her intelligence, strong personality, kindness and hospitality, in the end forced most people in Harare, including those in the administration, to respect her. Thus her room in *MaOld Brikisi* eventually became a kind of court, where many local residents came in search of solace and wisdom from her.

Margaret's first daughter, Agnes, grew into a dazzling beauty. With her mother's brains and a great deal more education than her mother, Agnes built up an all-round reputation as a gay, entertaining and sophisticated hostess. Men of substance, black as well as white, found her to be a kind of goddess, irresistible. And she in turn manipulated them to her advantage.

As women of this calling grew older and less attractive, their alternatives for survival were either to trail back to the Native Reserves, with their unappealing cultural life, or to resort to a precarious livelihood like picking up bones from dustbins to sell. If they were tough and fearless, they became *skokiaan* queens, with all the hazards attached to the trade. Margaret, who died in her sixties, while Agnes was in her late thirties took to playing cards for money, among other pursuits, and was very good at it. The rest were less fortunate, particularly if they did not have sons and daughters, who were prepared to look after them.

With the invasion into the township of younger and more

attractive women and the growth of a more permissive attitude to sex, professional prostitution became less and less lucrative. But it did not become an organized trade, as it is in American and European cities, where in some cases men own the women of the streets and appropriate the bulk of their earnings. I only came across one example of sexual racketeering involving third parties, and it was nipped in the bud before it had a chance to spread.

The great masses of black people who poured into the city in the wake of the post-war economic boom quickly showed that social facilities were utterly inadequate. There were only two halls, the Harare Recreation Hall, which took no more than five hundred people, and a smaller, private one at the Kaufmann's plot, which accommodated even fewer. Residents were allowed to organize their various tribal dances on Sundays and public holidays, it is true, but only at Musika. All amusements were restricted to certain hours and so in the evenings thousands of the inhabitants of Harare had nothing to do except sit and drink in their homes. Africans have a passion for song and dance, and while the older inhabitants were somehow prepared to put up with this situation, the more recent arrivals, especially young people, could not tolerate such regimentation. They decided to create their own kind of leisure activity. The result was that any place free from the interference of the peripatetic police was converted into a dancing arena. Indeed, some of the more enlightened employers with premises in the heavy industrial sites provided the space for these Africans to amuse themselves after working hours.

At this stage a new kind of beat emerged in African music, more appealing than tribal or ballroom music. Guitars became fashionable and talented musicians were exploring the whole field of black music. The result of their movement was that a type of pop music emerged that had a distinctive local urban character.

The heavy industrial area became the centre of this form of entertainment, and scores of men and women were drawn to MaSaka, the name Africans gave this vicinity. (It was so named because some of the MaSaka assemblies took place inside hastily erected hessian sack enclosures. Some employers were more generous, and allowed them to be held in tobacco warehouses.) As this ground was private property and, therefore, technically

outside the direct control of the police and the Native Administration, quite a number of Europeans were attracted to these dances, if only to watch the extraordinary gyrations of the African women. They were fascinated by the music, played principally on guitars, saxophones, drums and gourds filled with small pebbles, which produced the effects of tambourines and castanets.

Naturally, news of this kind of music travelled quickly, and hundreds of people from all over Salisbury streamed to MaSaka, looking for excitement. One Saturday night in 1948 or 1949, I took my brother-in-law and his wife, who, for safety's sake, was dressed as a man. We were out for a good evening and had one, for the MaSaka music and dance were excellent. What is more, people were controlled and behaved splendidly, despite the excessive drinking.

As we left, we saw groups of men standing on the other side of the main road. We could not resist finding out what they were doing in the thick grass and the few trees that covered quite an extensive area of empty ground. We noticed that from time to time a man from each group walked deeper into the grass, where he disappeared for a while and then returned with a happy expression on his face. As soon as one came back another followed his trail and disappeared as the one before him. It was almost like a drill. We listened to the conversations, all in whispers, and could scarcely believe what we heard.

There must have been at least one hundred men altogether and each one of them was required to pay two shillings and a sixpence as a fee for having sexual intercourse with one of about a dozen women somewhere in the grass. Each woman was chaperoned by a man who was given the title of 'store-keeper'. He it was who took the money and sent each paying client to the spot where the girl he was guarding waited.

In other words, these were organized brothels—something entirely new in the African community. I was shocked at the discovery, and recognized that these degrading practices were the direct result of the shortage of women and the breakdown of morality that had occurred among the Africans in the wake of massive industrial expansion in this city. Social restraints which had prevailed in the old tribal environment had gone overboard.

The rest of that weekend I spent writing a lengthy article

describing all that I had seen. It was a scoop which went on the front page of the *African Weekly*, whose sales zoomed to dizzy heights that week, not only among the Africans, but also the Europeans. My piece was quoted by the European Press and for a time I enjoyed the reputation of being a sharp reporter.

The police acted swiftly and stopped both the dances and the sex in the grass.

In the eyes of most white Rhodesians the African woman was either a mute, ignorant breeding machine or a prostitute. There was nobody in between. To reinforce this simple view, the black woman, with numerous, untidy, unwashed and snotty-nosed kids, including one strapped on her back by a *mbereko*, was not an uncommon sight in and around Salisbury; and the cook's wife would occasionally come in to visit her husband from the country and sit idly in the sun at the back of the master's house, where she would watch the world go by with complete indifference to the critical gaze of white people around her. At the opposite end of the scale there were also the overdressed, coquettish African women who attracted groups of male servants in the back streets and occasionally caused rows and fights among them. These facts were conclusive to white Rhodesians. The black woman was a useless creature.

Of course the tribeswoman who visited Salisbury to see her cook or garden 'boy' husband, would have nothing in common with the 'baas' and 'missus'. Unable to speak English, trained to keep her distance from white strangers and knowing that the towns were hostile human jungles, where she could not take any chances, she had no way of projecting the real personality behind her outwardly stolid appearance. In the subtle anti-partnership campaign carried out among the settlers, even within the ruling United Federal Party itself during the days of the Federation, this type of African woman was seized upon as a strong argument against integration. But she and the peripatetic prostitute did not represent the total spectrum of African womanhood, any more than the cook, the bedroom 'boy' or the street sweeper represented all African males.

There was plenty of evidence to the contrary. Indeed, anyone with an open mind would have seen that by the 1960s nowhere else in East and Central Africa were African women adapting

themselves at such a pace. This was especially true in the big centres such as Salisbury and Bulawayo.

Indeed, the position and role of the urban African woman took the character of a phenomenal social and economic revolution. Nowhere was this change more dramatic than in the field of employment. Towards the end of the 1930s and as Southern Rhodesia's economic expansion began to gather momentum, more and more African women entered domestic service as nannies for white children and naturally proved themselves to be better than men. By the end of the war they had virtually squeezed out the men and boys who used to go wheeling white kids in their prams about the streets and parks of Salisbury.

Then with the post-war massive white immigration and further industrial expansion, these so-called 'useless creatures' became washerwomen, cooks and chambermaids. The next stage was that employers in the tobacco, textile and clothing industries especially, discovered that they were adaptable, alert and nimble-fingered. They took on more and more of them.

Meanwhile the general improvement in our education brought into Harare and Salisbury as a whole from 1946 on an altogether new class of African woman: young, vital, emancipated and fashion-conscious. I remember a friend of mine in those days remarking: 'Where were all these wonderful girls before?' They had, of course, been kept in the reserves by their still suspicious parents. But now parental authority was on the wane. So was that of the puritanical missionaries. In any case, many of the parents too were coming into the towns.

The better-educated girls became teachers and hospital nurses. Many of the nurses went for their training to South Africa, particularly to Durban and Johannesburg, and returned greatly 'Europeanized'. These, naturally, were the most eligible as prospective wives among the black male 'elite'. They were clever, amusing and dedicated to their work. When the exclusively African hospital was built on the hill south of the heavy industrial sites, it was amusing to notice how men flocked there in the hope of attracting some of these, the most desirable women of Harare.

The one African girl in Salisbury who made real history among her people not long after the war was Miss Magorimbo, the daughter of a headmaster in the Highfield Village Settle-

ment. This was because she had obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in South Africa, the first Rhodesian African woman to have done so. For an African girl to have worked hard enough to attain this distinction seemed a real slap in the faces of the whites who clung to their belief that our women were 'useless'.

In a way the girls working as cooks or child-minders in European homes formed a distinctive, colourful class of their own. They were very close to the white society in whose houses they became permanent fixtures, like the furniture. They were more prized by the employers than male household servants, and were even allowed to occupy a room in the house, whereas the 'boys' were tucked away in a small cramped *kia* right at the end of the garden. Sometimes these women would be expected to sleep with their white masters while the 'missus' was away. In such cases, they would receive extra pay, kindness and other favours. In one instance brought to my attention, the 'missus' actually joined forces with the husband and pleaded with the serving girl to agree to his proposition. 'He won't take anything away from you, nanny', 'madam' is reported to have said. The girl resisted and in the end went where her services did not include going to bed with the 'baas'. But, of course, other girls accepted these arrangements.

The nannies and other domestic maids were very much in evidence on Thursday and Sunday afternoons and evenings, the occasions when white Salisbury, out of the goodness of its heart, let these girls free to see their various relations and have a 'bit of fun' in their township, Harare. They were then out of uniform and dressed well; many of them owned bicycles, sleek new machines, and one found it hard to believe that they were so poorly paid. The average wage of a nanny during that period was about £3 per month, and that was very often more than the cook or garden 'boy' earned, in spite of his own family responsibilities. The uniforms were supplied free and the girls were fed by the employers, so they were something of a privileged class in domestic service, and they could afford to save.

The occasions to see these and other Harare women at their best were the ballroom dancing and beauty competitions staged in the Harare Recreation Hall. These dances took place on Friday nights and Sunday afternoon and evening every week. Dancing competitions happened once a month, while the beauty

contests occurred perhaps once in six months. These girls presented a dazzling spectacle and they would have astonished those settlers who nursed the notion that the 'mafazis' were cows. Perhaps unbeknown to a great many white women of Salisbury, the Harare women were among some of their most adept pupils in dress fashions, poise and the ways to flatter men. The African men were equally well dressed for such occasions and they included waiters and cooks, who copied their white masters in every way and somehow managed to afford tail suits and starched collars. They knew how to treat their ladies, apart from being perfectionists in their foxtrots, waltzes, tangoes and such. The judges of the dancing and beauty competitions had to be Europeans, something that used to annoy intensely not only some of the local officials who were trying hard to keep the races severely apart, but also educated Africans, who realized only too well that this wholesale, child-like imitation of white culture by these people was one of the strongest factors contributing to their oppression. In the mind of the type of African to whom dancing and beauty competitions were a serious part of life, only white judges were impartial, and of course the Native Administration willingly issued them entry permits, in order to foster that part of the African mind, which accepted his total dependence on the 'baas'.

For all these various strata of urban African womanhood, marriage was the most desirable and immediate goal. And when a woman did manage to get married, especially in the Church, which implied a binding contract, she was either greatly envied or esteemed by the rest of her kind, depending on their own personal state. But in this melting-pot of social, political and economic forces so heavily tipped against black people as a whole, the state of marriage was threatened from all sides. Therefore it proved to be both highly adventurous and insecure.

The main source of this threat was enforced poverty. Most black heads of families earned what economists agreed then were salaries below the poverty datum line. Three pounds per month for a family of five or more was common in Harare, even up to the 1960s. One of my neighbours in 7th Avenue, Jotham, so-called 'delivery boy', is a case in point. Married, with five children, he was for so long obliged to live on this kind of grossly inadequate wage that in the end he had to let his wife take up employment in a uniform and clothing factory.

There she met another man and that was the end of his marriage.

As a journalist and in contact with all classes of the Harare people, I came across many cases of this sort and could not help but come to the conclusion that this abject poverty, imposed by a white settler community enjoying one of the highest standards of living in the world, was the biggest cause of broken marriages among my countrymen. Conversely, the high divorce rate among Rhodesian Europeans would seem to have had a direct relationship with their life of ease and affluence. Many African wives brewed *skokiaan* for sale or practised prostitution secretly in order to help their husbands clothe and educate the children. Moreover, in a society where there were so many men and so few women, the latter, particularly young girls, were exposed to pressures of the strongest kind. Many Harare girls, however well brought up, were pregnant or got married at a very young age.

It was largely for this reason that some moralists in Harare campaigned either for the closure of the beer halls altogether, or to let people drink in their homes so that respectable women were not pestered by the hordes of sex-starved single men who flocked to these places. But, of course, winding up or restricting the trade of this municipal gold mine would scarcely have been considered by the City Council, let alone by the thousands whose lives revolved round the beer halls and beer gardens. Eventually, there were about five of them, large, paddock-like constructions at strategic places, and they were filled to capacity the moment they opened for business. It was there that the average Harare resident drowned his or her sorrows. It was there that marriages were broken and new ones arranged. It was there that fathers and mothers spent the money that should have bought the maize-meal, bread and sugar to feed their children. Every penny collected here from the sale of beer went to the coffers of the City Council, but was supposed to come back indirectly to the residents in the form of the more amenities. The authorities argued that without this source, the Africans could not have the benefits they were getting. Our counter-argument was that we would build our own homes and finance our own services through rates and taxes if we were put on an equal footing with the local Europeans as regards wages, but it went completely unheeded.

Indeed, such capitalist language was greeted as the product of communist influence.

Some of the women of Harare rose to social positions of considerable influence in the affairs of this township. The most outstanding of them all up to about the end of the forties was Mrs Musodzi Ayema. Born in the nearby Seke Reserve, Amayi Musodzi married a Bemba man from Northern Rhodesia and settled in Harare, where their four sons and one daughter were born and raised. One of their sons, Moses Ayema, a school-mate and friend of mine for many years, was to spend several years in detention in the 1960s because of his active support of the African National Congress and the National Democratic Party, which succeeded it.

Over the years Mrs Ayema took on a more and more active part in local affairs, especially campaigning on behalf of women, and became their spokeswoman in the Harare branch of the Native Welfare Society and other organizations. In this, Mrs Ayema, a Catholic, like the rest of her family, was greatly assisted and promoted by the Rev. Father Alfred Burbridge at St Peter's Mission, who, not without justification, called her 'the uncrowned Queen' of Harare. She was outspoken and single-minded, and often managed to silence African men, whose attitudes generally were that women should be seen, but not heard. In time she earned the respect of most men and women in Harare, hence the title 'Amayi' (Mother) Musodzi.

When the late King George VI and the Queen Mother visited Rhodesia in 1947 and stayed at Government House in Salisbury, she was one of the few Africans invited to dine with them. But she caused some embarrassment because she refused to sit at the table, preferring the floor because, she said, she wished to follow the African custom.

In recognition of her outstanding services, all sections of the African residents as well as the Salisbury City Council later agreed to call the Harare Recreation Hall 'Mayi Musodzi', and so in this way this short, plumpish and public-spirited lady was permanently etched into the history of Harare.

As a journalist, one soon realized how cosmopolitan the African residents of Harare were and what, in the long run, the economic, political and racial consequences of this imposed human order would likely be. This arrangement constituted one of the quickest and strongest forces in the destruction of tribalism and class consciousness among the black people. In other words, by creating a place like Harare for his immediate advantage, the white Rhodesian was inadvertently making a contribution to black unity and finally and conversely to the annihilation of this very wildly unbalanced way of life. Anyhow, in the view of the ruling race a man's tribe had scarcely any relevance. We were 'natives' and as 'natives' we had to share a common fate and a common way of life, although we represented every level of human development, from the most primitive tribesman who could not use a lavatory seat properly or ran like a demented stone-age man at the sight of a whining ambulance, to a university graduate.

At the very bottom of this black community were the *matanyera*, namely, lavatory cleaners, street-sweepers and garbage-collectors. They were rough, illiterate, and disgruntled, and the sight of them generally unnerved the average woman and child in Harare. As a young boy I saw a group of such men set upon a woman who had poured water into a dustbin they were just about to empty. They knew they were the lowest of the low in our township. Hence they were full of aggression. As so often happens, they were mostly foreigners, who had a narrower choice of jobs than the local people.

Not very different from the *matanyera* were countless men who did other menial jobs, such as handing bricks and tools to white artisans, sweeping and polishing floors in shops, offices and factories, carrying bags of maize and cutting grass. And, of course, there were the many hundreds who worked in the tobacco industry, a number of whom were very young boys,

particularly from Mozambique and Nyasaland. Most Portuguese subjects would not have been to any school, let alone met an educated black person before they came to Zimbabwe. So it was not surprising that in spite of the racial system in my country, they thought English rule preferable to that of their less racially oriented Portuguese régime.

The *matanyera*, tobacco-graders and others of that ilk, had the lowest standard of living. If they were not fed by their employers, they existed mainly on the simplest diet, the staple maize-meal preparation called *sadza* and occasionally a little meat, with vegetables. This fare took some time to prepare, and had to be stirred for a fairly long time before it was thick and properly cooked. It would take at least an hour to prepare, and when one was rushing to work, there just wasn't the time to do all this. As a result, most of these men, who had no understanding of the importance of nutrition, frequently lived solely on plain white bread, buns, tea and Coca-Cola. But this fare came nowhere near what nutrition experts regarded as a wholesome diet. Few white employers seemed to consider the relationship between nutrition and the output of their black employees. Freed from the restraining influences of their tribal chiefs, wives and other relatives, they lived dangerously and drank any amount of the poisonous *skokiaan*. They could not have been a particularly energetic and efficient group of workers, and it was no wonder that they were the least healthy and the least stable. Indeed, many stole sugar, bread and anything edible at the slightest chance. The commonest form of crime in Salisbury was petty thieving mostly for survival. A lot of these people also played cards to make money, though this was forbidden by law.

Thus, in terms of serious industrial production, this type of African was almost a wasted asset. He was generally inefficient, and probably an economic burden to a lot of employers. He was invariably confused and lost in the whirl of events around him. He caught syphilis just as easily as he caught the common cold, and went tearing in panic to the common, but dubious urban witchdoctor saying that some evil person had put the curse on him. He hit back as violently for the theft of a sixpence by his room-mate as he did for the theft of his girlfriend, who usually was just a common prostitute. He asked his 'baas' or 'missus' some of the most stupid, child-like questions, and irritated them to the point of despair. He said 'Yes' where he

should have said 'No'. He was housed somehow and anyhow, either at the factory premises under very primitive conditions or in Harare, usually in huge prison-like hostels, where bed-bugs, fleas and cockroaches were a part of his daily existence. He only needed the simplest form of guidance and education. But all he got was invariably abuse, he was always exploited and left to languish in his ignorance. Characteristically, the settlers used him as the yard-stick with which to judge all Africans.

Above these lower levels came various strata, ranging through the middle classes to the 'elite', who included politicians, teachers, journalists, court interpreters, radio announcers and others of that sort. I am using these classifications in a very broad sense and must stress that they were recognizable among ourselves only, not by the settlers, who lumped us together as 'natives'. I do admit that a few thoughtful white citizens, even civil servants, especially when the policy of partnership was in vogue, did indeed realize that we were not all the same and they took this into account in their dealings with individual Africans. But so far as the Rhodesian Government's native policy and its supporting laws were concerned, we were a classless race of people. No distinctions were made.

But of course what job a man did was no reliable yardstick to measure his ability and standing in this community, where the majority had had no chance of any sort of academic education and technical training. Indeed, a great many men were forced to remain in hum-drum and dead-end jobs when they were fitted for better employment, had the system allowed it.

For example, there was Mr Shato, the founder of the Salisbury African Waiters' Association. An impressive, goatee-bearded man, he moved the Harare crowds by the sheer power of his eloquence, logic and understanding at the many mass meetings at which he spoke in those days. He was concerned with political and economic injustice in my country, but particularly with the conditions under which Africans in the catering industry worked. He explained them logically and clearly as though he had taken a course in economics and industrial relations. The masses cheered and accepted him as one of their most able leaders, but all Mr Shato could do for a living was to serve tea and cakes to white people. At that time

he was employed in the Pocket's Tea Room in Salisbury.

Another remarkable man was Mr David, at this period of time the head chef at one of the leading hotels in the city. This tall, impeccably well-dressed man had come from Nyasaland in the early 1920s. Sooner or later, he decided to go into the entertainment business and formed one of the first big dance bands fashionable in the Harare of those times. His was such a sweeping success that it used to draw large crowds from all parts of Salisbury. It also attracted and employed some of the most talented musicians in the black community. One of them was Charles Mzingeli, a violinist and pianist of no mean accomplishment. (Indeed this was how Mzingeli managed to earn his living after the death of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in the middle of the 1930s.) Mr David did not go into active, front-line politics, but he was a very influential man in Harare. When I came to know him he was not only a head chef but also the proprietor of a grocery shop in Harare, run by his large, spirited wife, 'Magumede'. When he died in the late 1950s, he was one of the most revered father-figures in the township and thousands attended his funeral.

Another man of distinction, like Shato and David, was Mr Patrick Pazarangu from Rusape. For a long time he was a record-holder in the African cycle-racing championships, which were some of the most exciting features of Harare life during the 1930s. In 1946 he joined the Reformed I.C.U. and became its secretary and the life-long confidant of its founder, Mzingeli. He served it fearlessly and with a determination that earned him universal admiration among his people. All he was ever allowed to do by the General Post Office where he was employed nearly all his working life was to sort and deliver letters.

I could go on mentioning the names of people who, despite their limited school education and humble working roles, became sharp exponents of their people's freedom: taxi-drivers, lorry-drivers, policemen and street vendors, some of whom had previously been school teachers, but left the profession because they were too low-paid and badly treated to stick at it.

Probably the most enterprising and therefore financially better-off in the township were the businessmen. The 'big shots' in this

merchant class were the cartage hauliers and omnibus operators. Among the most powerful of these black capitalists were the remarkable Chidavaenzi brothers. Theirs was the richest, most efficient and best organized of all transport companies. Their vehicles travelled between Salisbury and such varied parts of the country as Mazoe, Bindura, Shamva, Domboshawa, Chinamora Reserve and beyond. They were farmers too and some of the biggest producers of maize in the country.

VaShawasha by tribal origin, but Salvation Army by religious persuasion, the Chidavaenzi (translated 'lover of strangers') were humble people and followed a simple life. Working extremely hard, with an unusual degree of business co-operation and discipline, they avoided as much publicity and ostentation as possible. When I knew them, none touched strong drink, none was a womanizer, and they did not go for lavish living. Their youngest brother became a teacher and took a university degree in economics. Like his elders, he remained one of the most self-effacing educated Africans one could meet in the country.

Until his death in the 1960s, my cousin Bernard Vito was another outstandingly well-to-do businessman in Harare. He started after the last war with a taxi service, and accumulated enough capital to purchase a passenger bus, then another and another, until he owned several, some operating between Highfield, Harare and the city centre, while the others travelled between Salisbury and the Mrewa district. He was a dashing figure, handsome and fun-loving, but he was also very hard-working and repaired his own vehicles. He was often to be seen covered in grease. In his case, the influence of his father, the head of the Harare municipal police force, helped a great deal. Sergeant Vito had many friends among white people in important positions and their goodwill was important in the matter of obtaining licences. Bernard had several younger brothers, most of whom helped in running his business. Had Bernard, as also the Chidavaenzi and various others too many to name here, been given access to institutional finance, he would have been able to expand far more than he did and to contribute infinitely more to the country.

In a class of his own, then as now, was big, ebullient and politically influential Isaac Samuriwo from the Chihota Reserve, which is in the Marandellas area. Here is an African

who has shown an extraordinary versatility, going through a whole range of activities and making a strong impact in each. Isaac was originally trained as an agriculturalist in South Africa. But when he came back home he gave up this profession because the Rhodesian Government would not employ him on the same conditions and pay as those enjoyed by the white provincial agricultural officers. Instead he turned to business and went at it in a style all his own—buses, shops, houses to let, grinding mills and various other projects. At one time he was reputed to be worth several thousands of pounds, which, by Rhodesian standards, put him in the millionaire class. But Samuriwo was not the kind of man to deny such rumours. The measure of his proverbial wealth was his boundless energy and flair for publicity. He was that rare African who could walk up to any one of his rich white connections in the business world, ask for an immediate loan of some fantastic amount and saunter away with a cheque for the sum he had so casually requested. He had inexhaustible charm, a facile gift of the gab and an overpowering presence.

It was what he was able to get away with in his black community that really set him apart from most other people. Time and time again during my days in Salisbury, Samuriwo was forgiven by Africans for what were normally regarded as unpardonable political sins. For instance, once he campaigned for Parliament on the ticket of the Rhodesian Front. There were cries of anguish in Harare, in Highfield and other black circles. But these never deprived Isaac of his social magnetism. However, it was a different story altogether when lesser men than Samuriwo tried the same game: they were permanently ostracized. Some were even stoned. Then from this extreme position, Isaac subsequently veered to the United Federal Party and entered Parliament, still against the wishes of the nationalist movement, but still being excused in the end.

Mr Samuriwo was always one of those Africans who were inevitably sought after by people from abroad wishing to know the black man's point of view. Thus, like us at the African Press, he was visited and consulted by a constant stream of curious politicians, journalists and religious personalities. One of these organizations was the Moral Re-Armament, some of whose crusading members swooped on the country as the Federation became an accomplished fact. Isaac was drawn to it

almost immediately. There was once an M.R.A. meeting in the Harare Recreation Hall, designed to whip up enthusiasm among local influential Africans. This gathering took an unusual form: the converted listened to God for a few minutes and took down notes; they then got up to tell the audience what the Creator had communicated to them. Several people rose to speak while the rest listened quietly. But when Isaac had his turn, the audience was electrified by his astonishing candour. We could not help ourselves from breaking into loud laughter as he told us cheerfully that he had been cheating by charging the full price of a cord of wood bought from his pile when in fact it was only a half cord. Only he could say things like that and amuse rather than anger people.

There were indeed a great many other black personalities in the transport business, so many that most native reserves in the country were served by a bus service. They were prosperous men and one saw no reason why they should be denied the right to erect their own garages and repair shops and offices in Harare. But the Land Apportionment Act was unalterable. It was forbidden.

The Harare *Musika* was the main terminus for the rural passenger omnibuses. At weekends it heaved and choked with thousands of excited travellers and any number of brightly painted coaches ready to start for their various destinations in the Native Reserves. Although they were mostly permanent urban dwellers, these Shona people retained a love of the country. They spent a lot of money, not only on fares, but also on parcels of food, clothes and all kinds of other gifts for their numerous relations living in the country.

Some buses were clearly in good condition and could stand up to their load of passengers, plus the luggage, bicycles and other countless items. On the way back to Salisbury they would groan under the weight of chickens, maize bags and other fruits of the soil. But the older, more ill-used vehicles looked extremely doubtful, and indeed all too frequently passengers returned to Harare with nightmare tales of erratic driving, breakdowns, police interference or of just being stuck for hours, or even days, in the boggy roads in some of the Native Reserves.

As the captains of the black business world, these men desired to live in a style befitting their rich pockets and elevated social position. But if these black moguls chose to live in the

urban areas, as most of them did, they were forced to go to Harare, the Highfield Village Settlement and the Mabvuku Township, where they were tenants just as all the other Africans, and they occupied the same confined, crowded houses, surrounded by muddy roads, communal lavatories and huge piles of smelling rubbish, that were left uncollected for weeks on end.

Then there was the petite bourgeoisie common to most towns: the small shopkeepers, mostly grocers, butchers, wood-vendors, carpenters, shoemenders, barbers, taxi-owners and numerous hawkers of one sort or another. As a result of the country's native policy, these people worked under impossible conditions. They were a tiny fraction of the Harare citizenry; until the National section was built there were no more than a dozen or so licensed grocers and butchers. When the township expanded another dozen appeared on the scene, but none of them, rich or poor, could sell more than the most elementary necessities of life such as bread, flour, sugar, tea, jam and Coca-Cola. They could only operate from municipally-owned premises, the majority of which were no bigger than the average sitting room or bedroom in Harare. They manufactured nothing. Everything, except the vegetables, chickens, eggs and other foodstuffs brought in by Africans from the country, was supplied by the settlers and the Indians in the city, most of whom charged dubious prices and allowed no credit. The native trade throughout the country was a cash trade. The general rule was that the African was untrustworthy; added to this was the well-known fact that the people of Harare had no security of tenure. Therefore, the African, whether he was a direct consumer or a retailer, had to pay cash for all his goods.

But these were not the only limitations imposed on the African trader. Under normal circumstances, those in the meat business ought to have been able to make a very good living because this was a major industry in the country, and Africans have an insatiable appetite for beef. But the slaughter of cattle and the distribution of meat were in the hands of the Cold Storage Commission, a semi State corporation, and its policy was to ration beef to the few Harare butchers, which were no bigger than the average tobacconist in Britain. The result was

that most of these people made hardly any profit. Milk also came from a monopolist corporation and all of it was produced by white farmers, while millions of Africans had millions of cattle, for which a similar organization could have been set up so that plenty of it could have been made available for everybody.* Thus nothing like enough milk was sold in Harare and it was so expensive that only the relatively well-off could afford to drink it. Certainly no trader could have made a living on the sale of milk. Apart from the beer brewed and sold by the Council, I cannot think of any other item, food or drink, that was not rationed. While these shortages did not too seriously affect the average Harare housewife who could go and do her shopping in the city, unless there was a strike, they severely restricted the scope of the man in business. Grocers were, by and large, in the same position as the butchers, because of the very small margin of profit allowed on most things such as maize-meal, tobacco, bread, tea, etc., whose prices were strictly controlled. Thus, unless they could supplement their resources by proceeds from their agricultural products, the majority of them worked under considerable financial difficulties. A well-known Harare character called Marowa, colourful, amusing and apparently always happy, stunned the Africans of Salisbury when he committed suicide because his business had collapsed. But more dogged individuals kept up the struggle, some of them by careful management and by taking up other forms of employment, others by exploiting those who worked for them. Hence the saying that the black businessman was the worst employer in the country was not groundless.

Further limitations were put on traders in that they were not allowed to occupy more than one shop or make structural alterations to their existing rented premises. There were no banking or building society branch offices in the township where they or indeed other residents could deposit their cash. The first and only sub-post office and public telephone box came into existence some time in 1947 only because Mr B. J. Mnyanda, former editor of the *African Weekly*, had fought for

* Father Francis Gits, S.J. (see Chapter 6) started an African milk-producing co-operative at Gokomere Mission, Fort Victoria, to which he was transferred in the late 1930s. I understood from some of the local Africans that it was a real success but was discontinued when Gits returned to England during the war. His would have been the only attempt of this kind in Rhodesia.

these facilities. Until then we had to go all the way to the city centre to buy an ordinary stamp or make a telephone call.

The wood-vendors, though very small in number, were vital to Harare, for all our fuel was wood. We were not permitted to use electric irons, radios, refrigerators etc. Electric light bulbs beyond a certain voltage were also forbidden.

Many Africans wished to join the small business community in Harare, but the sheer impossibility of obtaining premises and trading licences killed their dreams. These facilities which non-Africans secured as easily as they obtained their tots of whisky from across the bar counter, were doled out to black people as though they were favours, not their normal rights in what termed itself a free-enterprise economic system. It was not sufficient for the African would-be trader to be in possession of the required capital. Ultimately, he had to be a 'suitable native' and that was for the administrators to judge. Anyone branded a 'trouble-maker', which implied that his political outlook was wrong, seldom found it easy to acquire these privileges.

By now serious technical training as an integral part of the African educational system was a thing of the past. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934 had clearly eliminated this aspect of teaching the African which Lord Grey, the second Administrator, had recommended soon after his visit to Chishawasha Mission in 1897 because he had felt, quite rightly, that it was the best means by which to regenerate the defeated African people and enrich Southern Rhodesia. All the same, a few missionary institutions still pursued the advice of Lord Grey as best they could in spite of the Act. Some Hararians were skilled artisans, especially carpenters, builders and motor mechanics. Many of these too would have liked to set themselves up in their township and earn an independent living, but the municipality of Salisbury provided no premises whatsoever in Harare where any black artisan could work on his own account. Only one man, David Chihota, was allowed the use of a small piece of land to establish a school for motor mechanics. But in the end it became no more than a show-piece, with a few permanently broken-down cars. In obedience to the demands of the white trade unions, the Industrial Conciliation Act was so rigidly

observed that black tradesmen could not be employed to do any kind of skilled job in their own ghetto. The black builder, fitter, carpenter and electrician had to turn to other jobs when he could have been building houses for his own people, making their furniture or repairing their cars. What few independent skilled men there were, such as mechanics and carpenters, were forced to make private arrangements with Indians and liberal white settlers on the fringes of Harare, by which they rented their premises to pursue their trade. In some instances, they had to pretend that they were on the payrolls of those who had granted them the rooms in which they carried out their trades. Otherwise the ubiquitous City Council inspectors came and turfed them out, especially if they could find the excuse to attach the label of 'trouble-maker' to them.

Among the best wood craftsmen and furniture manufacturers in Salisbury were several Africans from the Chipinga District near Umtali. They were trained at the Mount Selinda Mission, which was well known for its technical training, particularly in agriculture and carpentry. This institution was run, as it still is today, by the American Board Mission, who, like the early German Jesuit Fathers at Chishawasha, were convinced that African education was not complete unless it enabled a man to earn his living in a trade. For this reason, the Board imported from the United States tutors qualified in woodwork, agriculture and other useful courses. The best known of these dedicated and practical-minded people was Mr Alvoord who, during his lifetime, probably made the greatest single contribution to the development of the African people of Rhodesia. This was because, soon after he arrived at Mount Selinda, he realized that African agriculture was the backbone of the country and decided to make it the most important subject. He put pressure on the Government to take the same view and was so successful that he was offered employment by the Department of Agriculture to put his ideas to the test. Today Rhodesian Africans are among the most efficient farmers on the African continent. This achievement is largely due to this amazing man.

But no less important was the Mount Selinda's training of wood craftsmen, who naturally went into the towns where their skills could be employed more readily. The most prominent of these artisans were the Dhliwayo brothers, Philemon and John, who settled in Salisbury and managed to set themselves up as

furniture manufacturers. By the time that I came to live there, they were so well established that their products were in demand in a lot of middle-class African and white homes all over Salisbury. By the 1950s they had a semi-permanent contract with the famous Rhodesian firm of Haddon & Sly, which displayed their products in its beautifully appointed shop in the city centre and sold to its predominantly white clientele.

The Dhliwayo brothers and other first-class carpenters from Mount Selinda initially worked in rented premises along Salisbury Street. But when the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act came into force, around 1948, they were thrown out. There being no facilities in Harare or Highfield, they were given special dispensation to operate in rooms leased to them by an Indian businessman, in what was defined as a 'European area', just off the southern end of Sinoia Street. This was on the edge of Harare and therefore well hidden from the bulk of their rich customers. The space that they were allowed was very cramped.

Shorn of their misfortune of being born black, Philemon and John Dhliwayo, like the Chidavaenzi brothers, could have been two of the most useful and productive men in industrial Salisbury. They were industrious, efficient, shrewd businessmen, who steered clear of racial politics in Salisbury. They had the specialized skills the country needed, and they should have been given every encouragement to pursue their trade and train others. Instead, they were hampered in every way. Ian Smith has often told the world that merit alone is the measure by which white Rhodesia judges its citizens. If any one of his gullible overseas supporters had seen the conditions under which these talented men worked, he would quickly see the lack of truth in this much-vaunted claim.

A successful white businessman in Rhodesia invariably gained the admiration of his fellow men, and generally took up an active role in local, if not national, affairs, possibly ending up as a town councillor, or Member of Parliament. This was the normal pattern in white Rhodesia. Men who came in as nonentities acquired big names and large assets. For instance, there was Jacob Hendrik Smit, an immigrant from Holland. It was rumoured that he entered Rhodesia from Beira on foot and started life in the country by selling bananas in the streets from a wheel-barrow. But his success was such that by 1934 he

was the country's Minister of Finance. By 1942 he was such an influential man that he could afford to break with the Huggins administration and became elected leader of an extreme right-wing organization which called itself the Liberal Party. From this platform, he mounted an attack on everything Huggins did, inveighing against the drift of black people into the white towns and the supposed socialist trends of the Government. In the 1946 elections, the Liberals made all Rhodesia gasp in shock at their capture of twelve seats against the thirteen retained by the ruling party. This ponderous but able Dutchman, who smoked big cigars, which seemed to accentuate his tall figure, was justifiably believed to be on the threshold of power. Convinced that he understood the true wishes of the white electorate, Smit proceeded to preach with fearful passion the proposition that urban Africans should be uprooted and sent out to special native reserves. However, in Huggins he had a skilful rival, who soon outmanoeuvred him. He lost his seat altogether in the 1948 elections. We were delighted at the political destruction of this man whom we regarded as a poisonous viper, for in his short career as a leader of the illiberal Liberals he injected more anti-black feeling into Rhodesian politics than anyone in that period. But his meteoric rise to fame and fortune illustrates my contention that a settler who entered the world of business and obeyed the rules of the game automatically qualified for leadership of some sort.

For the successful African, the situation was very different. After the Second World War, few ordinary Africans were interested in moderate politics, and anyone who wished to command the attention of the masses had to speak with due regard to their belligerent mood, otherwise he was ridiculed or treated with hostility. He had to tell the truth without prevarication, and without fear. But that required courage, especially at a time when the right-wing opposition, led by Smit, was preaching a policy of outright repression of the black 'trouble-maker'. It did not matter in the long run whether the subject was the lack of drains or the inconvenience of police raids in the township. Every theme was political and neither the Government nor the Municipal Council of Salisbury liked to hear themselves blamed by their black citizens, who should have been full of gratitude for being allowed to reside in the white man's city.

Thus, if any African spoke out too often and too openly, he was marked down as a 'trouble-maker', and a tool of the Communists. He might lose his business premises and trading licence, if not the house he occupied, for the occupation of any room or house in Harare was permissible only on the condition that the resident was of some benefit to the white community in Salisbury.

To the average black businessman, who had come up the hard way, as most of them had, these were terrifying threats, and he had to toe the line and avoid politics. Indeed Harare businessmen, traders and craftsmen were initially swept into a political frenzy against the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act immediately after it was passed. Then warnings came that their licences and permits to live in the white man's urban kingdom were in danger of being withdrawn because of their identification with 'agitators'. The effect of this intimidation was that they nearly all melted away from the mass meetings that were being held in opposition to this legislation.

We at the African Press recognized fully the valuable role that the African businessman was playing in the Harare community, and we tried in every possible way to project his image as positively as we could in the journals we published, especially the *African Weekly*. We took the line that he was a man to be admired and respected, because of his drive and industry. We sincerely believed and asked our readers, both black and white, to believe that he was a symbol of the new African, of progress. In other words, we preached the message that capitalism was respectable, despite its abuse by those who exploited the black man so openly. We urged the Government, and, especially, the Salisbury City Council, to recognize his contribution to the economic life of the country and give him encouragement to prosper instead of hampering him with restrictions.

We devised a special feature article highlighting the achievements of certain personalities we chose from time to time. But the trouble was that once we had started to do this, every Harare and Highfield businessman or trader thought that he deserved the same publicity. It was while dealing with some of these people that I experienced at first hand the extraordinary vanity ticking in the bosoms of those black men who had acquired any sort of power. For instance, some insisted that you

should write down such silly things as that they had so many suits and shoes or that they had spent so much money on the weddings of their sons or daughters. More than that, when we encouraged these men to advertise their business undertakings in our papers, they were not content with giving us the details of their operations, but offered their personal photograph. To suggest that photographs were irrelevant and a waste of valuable space was taken as a personal insult. I can remember various occasions when these inflated men of substance walked into my office and banged money on the table, hoping that I would take the bribe and write generously about them. But 'dashing' of this sort was simply not known among the Rhodesian Africans, and I refused to take their money. They soon learned that we did our duty as we saw fit and not because we were bribed. However, we were not angels, and we were wooed in other, subtler ways, such as entertainment.

The many difficulties and problems of the black businessmen in Harare were certainly not all caused by hard-faced officials in the Native Administration. In many cases, they were their own worst enemies.

Firstly, few of them kept books. They just blindly bought and sold without keeping proper records to show whether they were gaining or losing in all their transactions. This ignorance was perhaps the most glaring fault in the education of black people in Southern Rhodesia, for until the Fletcher High School was started in Gwelo in the 1950s, no institution anywhere in the country taught Africans anything about business. Even then right-wing white politicians saw it as a threat to the future of white youths and girls in commerce and industry. The generation of Harare traders I knew in the fifties had had no theoretical training in business whatsoever. Hence their lack of appreciation that book-keeping was essential.

Secondly, these men did not have anything like the co-operation from their colleagues that contributed to the success of the Indians and the Jewish people. As a group, these businessmen could muster considerable economic assets which, if translated into cash value, amounted to many thousands of pounds. Had they been able to get together, they might have raised enough money to set up their own wholesale organizations, offering reasonable credit terms as well as cheaper prices than those charged them by the non-African merchants. The

idea was mooted from time to time, but it petered out in the confusion of Harare politics.

The one-man or one-family business concern was a fixed concept in the minds of these traders, and to suggest to any one of them that his shop or business might improve financially and in terms of new ideas if he took in someone other than his brother or son as a partner was like advising an African chief to allow another man to stand as a chief in opposition. In other words, they simply would not trust one another. Each one preferred to be the complete master of his own cramped shop or his family bus company, rather than join forces with a stranger.

This attitude was quite the reverse of the tribal tradition whereby co-operation in ploughing, weeding, harvesting and threshing was traditionally the very essence of the African agricultural economic system. The truth was that, despite his vocal belief in the urgency of African unity and in spite of the example set by the foreigners, the educated urban black man just could not begin to accept the idea that two men unrelated to each other could be tied together by a commercial bond and honestly share the burdens as well as the benefits of their efforts. I puzzled over this problem many a time and tried to encourage some of my friends to get away from this way of thinking. But nothing would change them. In effect theirs was an admission that the African could not be trusted with anyone's money other than his own.

A convincing example of this thought process was the case of Mr Onyimo, who had lived and worked in South Africa for many years during which he acquired much useful knowledge of the savings business. On returning home, he decided to initiate a scheme whereby any working person in Harare and the Highfield Village Settlement could put away a shilling per week into a common pool, which Onyimo managed and planned to invest. He hoped that, once the idea had caught on among the thousands of men and women living and working in this city, the fund would grow to such an extent that its members would be able to borrow bigger and bigger amounts of money for their various needs, repaying their loans at the lowest possible rate of interest. No bank or any other finance house in Rhodesia lent money to ordinary Africans, except to rare exceptions such as Mr Samuriwo. Therefore, his project

promised to fulfil a real social need among the masses of the African people. But Mr Onyimo had not gone very far with his scheme before rumours started flying around that he wanted to get rich quickly at the expense of the community. This was another way of saying that he was a crook and, in fact, the police tried very hard to prove that he was doing something illegal. Although they did not succeed, such a strong air of suspicion developed that his enterprise went bust before he had a reasonable chance to justify himself.

Thirdly, few Harare businessmen believed that there was any virtue in waiting for tomorrow to start enjoying the benefits of the labour of today. Why not live today instead of hoping to do so the next day which might never come? At the time I thought this mentality was peculiar to the Rhodesian Africans. But since those days I have travelled and learned enough to know that this outlook is as rife all over this puzzling continent as tribalism.

I also thought at the time that this instant-harvest logic was the direct consequence of lack of political power. And, of course, I was partially right, but I did not realize then that political power alone does not necessarily confer wisdom and prosperity on any people. Ultimately, what counts is how a nation uses the responsibility of self-determination it carries, and whether the education it devises for its young is relevant to the country's priorities.

In that oppressive environment, it was natural for us to blame the foreigner for all our failures. The stupid man, the indolent, the loafer, the unimaginative, the incompetent, all picked on the crafty, selfish settler as the cause of his lack of progress in any particular direction. By the same token, the smallest success or the least talent displayed by the African assumed huge proportions, became something to boast about in the community.

No one among the great mass of the residents of Harare was more prone to judge himself by these parochial values than the businessman. He was often ostentatious, and talked big, generally giving the impression that he was a man of means when, in reality, he might possess no more than a mere £50 or so in hard cash, or even only the goods displayed in his shop. In the local phraseology, he was a *Shasha*, a tycoon. Such Harare men were judged by objects that the eye could see and the hand

could touch: cars purchased for cash, women whom one could lure out of anywhere and last but by no means least, the fiery liquor of the white man that one could obtain from the Arcadia suburb. All these items were expensive and many an individual businessman went broke or into heavy debt because he could not curb his appetite for them. This way of looking at things was epitomized in the proverb, *Haufe nayo*—‘You do not die with it’. For all too many of these cheerful, happy-go-lucky black men, this motto was a perfect piece of logic and placed life in proper focus, to be enjoyed as it happened, from day to day.

The most obvious and outstanding gift of the people of Harare was that of song and dance. Tribal dances were the predominant form of entertainment and they displayed incredible variety: from the Shona, with their hectic *ngororombe* (reed), drum and *mbira* instrumental ensembles, to the Mazungendava of Nyasaland, with their extraordinary pipe bands. These performances used to take place in the open-air at the Musika market on Sunday afternoons, before the demands of commercialism and political meetings took over this area.

This was a fast evolving urban society, and its self-expression exploded in other directions. Before the Second World War a highly gifted African, Mr Ezekiah Chihota, now dead, explored new areas and brought indigenous Shona music into the twentieth century. He composed his own songs, and formed a large male-voice choir, which soon became an outstanding feature of Harare cultural life. No sporting and official occasion was complete without the presence of the Salisbury African Male Voice Choir, as it was called. Mr Chihota, born of the well-known family of Chief Chihota, made several records of his songs, most of which were in ChiZezuru. He left Rhodesia for Tanganyika because he was denied the full scope to use his talents. On the other hand the authorities in Dar-es-Salaam where he went later on welcomed him with open arms and put him in charge of the Arnotoglou social centre, which he made one of the liveliest places in that town.

However, for those who aspired to keep up with the times there was no doubt that the most popular form of music was the European ballroom dance variety. Both the players and

the public took to it with all the passion and energy they had. It was because of this enthusiasm that men like Mr David and various others were able to establish big dance bands, consisting of saxophones, violins, drums and other instruments. In the early 1930s the names of Makoni and Scott were famous in Harare before they moved to Bulawayo, whose black community they set ablaze with enthusiasm for their music. Later, and also in Bulawayo, a talented musician named Musarurwa leaped into instant fame when he composed and played his famous 'Skokiaan'. This was a hit throughout Central Africa and was later to be known across the world when Louis Armstrong made a recording of it in the fifties.

Another remarkable man, who became famous in Harare after the war, was Benedict Mazura from Chishawasha. He had been trained as a musician both at Chishawasha and later in the Rhodesian Police Band. Handsome, funny and suave, he, like David, Makoni and Scott roused his audiences to ecstasy and wild cheering.

From this stage, there developed smaller groups of stage concert musicians, who greatly improved and expanded the style developed by Ezekiah Chihota. One of the first and most accomplished groups called themselves De Pitch Black Evening Follies. They held an unchallenged lead throughout the late 1940s and up to the late 1950s. Founded by Moses Mphahlo, its members were mainly drawn from the Police Band and could each play a number of instruments. One of them, Mr Jona Mbirimi, for instance, was probably the best trumpeter in the country. De Pitch Black Evening Follies and other groups which came into existence later, surpassed previous musicians, not only in African pop music, but also in combining their music with dramatic sketches portraying the life and culture of their people, both rural and urban. They also engaged lovely and talented women singers and dancers, the most outstanding of all being Dorothy Masuka, a Harare girl, whose polished, cooing voice was eventually to be heard for many years on the African section of the Rhodesian Broadcasting system and on many records.

In the late 1950s a group of men hived off from the Follies and formed the Harare City Quads. Their leader was Mr Sonny Sondo, born and bred in Harare as several of these entertainers were. In no time at all, they overshadowed the once unmatched

reputation of the Follies, because of the extraordinary personality of Sonny Sondo. His rich tenor voice, youth and stage-manner acted as a magnet. When these were added to those of the rest of this group, such as Mr Samuel Matambo, the City Quads became, while they lasted, the kingpins of the Harare stage life.

To me these self-taught musicians and actors were an important element in the evolution of Rhodesian culture. They added colour and an extra touch of effervescence to life in the township. Indeed, it was a great blessing for most of us to be able to cast aside the bitterness of political meetings and go to an evening of entertainment provided by some of these artists. Unfortunately, there were then only two public halls and because they were not allowed to perform in the European places of entertainment, these groups found themselves severely limited as to the space and the number of times they could give performances.

When I visited the United States in 1957 I was impressed by the open enthusiasm of white Americans for the music of the Negro people. Negro musicians held their own, as I saw, in night clubs and other places, where rich white Americans came to listen. But white Rhodesians not only refused to see and reward their Africans for their talents, they put heavy barriers in their way.

Apart from the professional entertainers, there were scores of amateur singers and instrumentalists of one sort or another, particularly guitarists, who used the streets and the houses of Harare. At weekends when there was a spontaneous, festive spirit, private rooms or back yards became places of informal entertainment. A birthday, a marriage, a new car, any of these occasions might call for celebration, and demanded a gathering of friends and relations, the serving of alcohol and food, and music and dance. And, of course, those rooted in their ancient tribal customs always remembered their *Mashave* dances and other ritual ceremonies.*

A few years before I left Harare for the Highfield Village Settlement someone composed a song called *Aya Mahobo anda ka Kuchengefera*—‘These breasts (and other anatomical curves) I have been keeping for you’. It was earthy and it touched the right nerve and at once caught the imagination of Hararians.

* See *An Ill-Fated People* by Lawrence Vambe (page 80).

It coincided with the beginning of unlicensed night-clubs which brought considerable incomes to the organizers from the sale of beer, spirits and food. Usually held in private residences, these were simply called *Mahobo*. I attended many of them and for their sheer conviviality and sense of fun they put conventional dance bands and the stage groups in the shade.

I took the view that these were a healthy form of recreation, indeed an important new movement, which, subject to reasonable supervision, should be allowed to take its proper place in the life of a people who were otherwise so restricted. But my colleague at African Newspapers Nathan Shamuyarira, more serious-minded, even puritanical than I, took a different view. His reports in the Press about these *Mahobo* night sessions conveyed the impression that they were undesirable. This interpretation was sweet music in the ears of Rhodesian officialdom. The Police and the men who ran the Native Administration Department went further than well-intentioned Mr Shamuyarira, and concluded that the *Mahobo* night-clubs were sex-orgies. They started raiding them and prosecuting the organizers, particularly if they were found in possession of European liquor. In this way, the *Mahobo*, like so many other African social activities, were changed into being undesirable and unlawful and were driven underground. Some of our people felt bitter about this and began to say that we at the African Press were mischief-makers.

But, of course, to men and women who were resolved to live and live fully, official and Press interference were incapable of putting a complete stop to their determination to entertain themselves. They continued to sing, dance, and cheer. The police were *vana ve mahure*, sons of whores. Their bosses were criminal gangsters, *mabanditi*. So said the residents as they downed glasses of neat brandy, gin or whatever. They toasted themselves *vana vevu*, sons of the soil, who would inherit Zimbabwe as surely as the sun would rise tomorrow.

The *skokiaan* queens continued carrying out their lucrative trade, but would not say how much money they were making. In fact, no one told anyone how they made a living or how they came by the various goods they flogged—until they were arrested, that is. There was an enormous black industry whose assets were never known to the tax man. One chap was selling 'ghost' bags of groundnuts to a reputable soap-manufacturing

firm. Another sold gold, real, refined gold, to Indians or Jews which he obtained from trusted connections in the many small mines of Rhodesia. Those who had learned the art of exploitation could well afford to own new cars, lavish clothes, household goods and liquor.

Less daring entrepreneurs contented themselves with supplying European liquor to their fellow residents. It was the most desirable liquid of all, Harare's life-line, all the more so for being, until 1962, illegal. It was a highly punishable offence for a black man to possess and drink any of the bottled alcoholic beverages of the white man. Of course Africans did not think that they were being protected, but merely oppressed, and, like the Americans during Prohibition, they took no account whatsoever of the ban.

By law, people of mixed blood, if of good character, were granted permits by which they could purchase limited quantities of liquor per month, but they could never be employed in this line of business because they were considered unreliable, and hopeless inebriates who might drink up the profits of the white employer. So they used this privilege to set up their own trading syndicates. That was the origin of the shebeens in the towns of Rhodesia, and Salisbury, being the largest of them, probably had the biggest number of flourishing joints of this kind. Initially, and for a very long time they were run mostly by 'coloureds'.

The same law that said the pure-blooded African might not partake of white drink had no objections to his being employed in the trade. As tribal discipline broke down and European liquor became the very symbol of economic and cultural superiority, Africans employed in the trade began to plunder this industry. Middle-class business society in Harare, Mabvuku, Highfield and other places wanted regular supplies, especially at Christmas, Easter and other public holidays, and private celebrations. Even the dead were propitiated in gin, whisky, brandy and rum.

For a considerable number of years, the coloured people did extremely well from their monopoly of the shebeens, supplying the stuff to their less fortunate African kith and kin. They always charged double the retail price and some of them touted for customers, cheating and exploiting them as much as they could. There was, for instance, a well-known character called Nelson,

who was never sober and always diluted with water any quantity he had bought for a client after drinking the rest himself. Others took the money and disappeared, while one, Alfred, a little crippled man, now dead, cottoned on to a criminal trick. He got into the habit of putting sleeping pills into the drinks he served and then robbed his customers when they fell asleep.

Equally, there were honest and shrewd business shebeeners. Gilbert and Matilda were unquestionably among the nicest and most straightforward. And theirs was a place where you were sure of ample hospitality and you could drink at any time and for as long as you were in cash. Occasionally, a free bottle was proffered by the hosts, who also provided dance music for their special friends and customers.

There were also the wealthy, witty Edwards, with buses running between Salisbury and Mrewa; they also owned taxis. Both Mr and Mrs Edwards were born of African mothers and white fathers. The husband was one of the two sons of the well-known Native Commissioner, 'Wiri' (Willy) Edwards, a pioneer, who had witnessed the rising of the Shona and was still in office in the early 1930s. (Between him and the African people of Mrewa there was something of a lasting bond of friendship, all the more so because he raised a family among these people.) His two sons were some of the most industrious non-white personalities in Salisbury at this time, but they had a serious grievance that because they had 'black blood' on their mother's side, albeit related to the ruling house of Chief Mangwende, they were victims of discrimination.

However, African suppliers depended for their stocks mostly on stealing and, because they were so anxious to be rid of it quickly, they charged the lowest price possible. For instance, one rainy day a man burst into my house in 7th Avenue where I was entertaining some friends. He told us the good news that he had bottles of various brands of spirits to sell at ten bob each. We did not ask questions, but passed the hat round, raised about three pounds and told the chap to bring the drink in, which he did, six bottles, mostly gin and brandy.

A day or two later, the liquor section of the Police Criminal Investigation Department turned Harare upside down. Eventually, the man who had sold us the drinks was arrested. It turned out that he had broken into Glover's Bottle Store, between

Harare and Highfield, and had taken such a vast amount of liquor that he was anxious to dispose of it as speedily as possible. This was the only time I have had to go into the witness box and give evidence in this kind of crime.

Distilled and clarified drink had many advantages over the local native beer. It was clean and one got tipsy quickly on it. It attracted many friends, especially women. Indeed, a man known to be able to entertain well on European liquor easily attracted *vana vaka chena*, the beautiful, interesting girls employed in the domestic service of white Salisbury. But, of course, such pleasure had its hazards, expense and the risk of marital breakdown as well as of being arrested. '*Mukadzi anwa ane mashanga muchipfwa*'—a drunken woman will reveal any secret, was the saying in Harare.

Ordinarily, whether alone or with friends, you drank this liquor as quickly as possible, so that if the police came, they could only smell it on your breath. Then they could do nothing. You bolted the door of the house tight and opened it only when the liquor was all drunk. Some people poured it into a kettle or a teapot and in this way succeeded in throwing a casual policeman off the scent. If you were unlucky enough to befriend informers, well, it was just too bad. But after a time you weeded them out of your social circle. Our capacity, like that of the whites, was gargantuan, and most of us suffered no ill-effects, however much we took. In any case a great deal of it was sweated out by dancing to *Mahobo* music. You could take a car and drive to nearby woods, or if the police were hot in the township, you drove to Arcadia, for the coloured people were a pretty violent lot and did not hesitate to fight policemen if it was necessary.

But as time went on, the spirit of defiance grew bolder, local shebeens sprouted like maize plants and it became less difficult to evade detection. Militant politicians multiplied, and the attention of the police was turned from the trivial liquor traffic to the political revolutionaries and their meetings, where more and more inflammatory speeches were being made.

To turn to more spiritual types of distraction sought by my people as relief from the harshness of life in the township, religion always exercised a considerable influence, in spite of

increasing signs of materialism. The Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Salvation Army, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches had long-established branches in Harare, as had the Negro Methodist Episcopal Church, which was controlled from the United States through a Bishop who was stationed in South Africa.

The post-war years witnessed a tremendous spurt in the growth of the African separatist churches, especially those who called themselves *MaPostori*, the Apostles. They were very distinctive, being dressed in flowing white robes, tied by belts at the waist. The men kept long beards and carried staves, while the women wore *maduka*—cloth coverings over their heads. They did not drink or smoke, professing to be strict puritans, and were among the most violent critics of municipal beer halls. To all appearances, theirs was a life which made that of the adherents of the white-controlled Christian Churches seem positively debauched, for they practised what they preached. Most of their free time was spent in prayer meetings, either in their houses, if the weather was bad in the rainy season, or in secluded places outside Harare. At weekends these gatherings seemed to go on indefinitely, and the practice gave rise to many suspicions in the minds of ordinary Hararians. The commonest of these was that they indulged in free love—indeed the grounds for these allegations were pretty solid.

The movement was extremely popular among middle-aged women, wives as well as widows. The leaders of this sect openly advocated the concept that strong men should beget children with any woman follower so as to produce a generation of healthy, virile African boys and girls.

Some said that the preachers claimed to speak with the voice of God. At the prayer meetings in forest clearings, they told the audience that God had spoken saying that a certain man and woman should go aside and pray together in complete isolation for as long as they wished. This was sexual licence and wife-swapping, outsiders alleged, for they could not believe that twosome prayers were the reasons for men and women retiring alone behind the bushes.

This sect, like the Watch Tower movement, went from strength to strength, preaching absolute trust in God, and denouncing materialism. They also emphasized that the African people should steer their own religious course. This point was

the very core of black sectarianism: to be rid of white control and white interpretation of the Bible. Although the founders of some of these splinter churches did not say so, nor perhaps were even conscious of the fact, their movements were as political as were the trade unions, the Congress, or the Reformed I.C.U. They did not pass any political resolutions, but the underlying reason for their existence was to establish black self-determination.

One of these sects was started by a previously dedicated Salvation Army missionary, Captain Makoni. Not long after the war, Captain Makoni and Captain Nhari were sent to England for further training. When he returned, Captain Makoni was even more fed up with white leadership than he had been before. He soon fell out with his Church and set up on his own. An educated, dignified and certainly ambitious man, he was quite open about his criticism of his former white colleagues who, he said, had no wish to give his kind the scope to rise to higher positions. Because of his popularity in Harare, the local Salvation Army did everything they could to undermine his influence. This opposition seemed to work, for in the end the majority of African Salvationists remained loyal and his separate branch, which followed the Army's form of worship, complete with its own brass band, remained a tiny movement, scarcely able to pay the Captain's living expenses.

The ordinary citizens of Harare tended either to ignore these people or to regard them as religious eccentrics. But I thought that their role was an important one. They gave the uneducated, unemployed women of Harare some useful part to play in the community. They gave them self-confidence, and a religious platform to express their point of view. They kept families together when they could have been destroyed by the buffetings of life in Harare. All in all, theirs was an important contribution to the well-being of the people in Harare. The only ones who did any harm were those who taught their adherents to refuse medicines, inoculation, or even to see doctors. But where such cases were brought to the notice of the authorities, the police took action, particularly in small-pox cases.

One of the more commendable aspects of Huggins' policy was to improve African medical care, which was free. In this

sphere the name of Dr Andrew Paton Martin, Edinburgh-trained, stands out like a beacon on the Rhodesian horizon. This tall, gaunt Scotsman with a booming voice was appointed Medical Director in 1935, and launched a system of simple rural clinics and dispensaries, run by African male medical orderlies who were trained at the Salisbury General Hospital. By the end of the Second World War, Southern Rhodesia had probably the most efficient free medical service for Africans in this continent. Many of my friends left the teaching profession to become medical orderlies and not only cured many diseases, such as malaria, but also educated their fellow men to accept hospital treatment and modern medicines instead of relying, as in the past, wholly on their herbalists and *nganga* (African witchdoctors or medicine men).

The fruits of Dr Martin's medical mission were now graphically in evidence, not only at the Government and municipal hospitals, but also at the private doctors' surgeries on the edge of Harare, where African patients turned up in large numbers.

However, the old traditions also lingered on. While the stethoscope-holders could cure the body with their syringes and pills, they could not cope with many of the psychological ills of the black people. The towns bred new diseases in the mind that white Rhodesia could not begin to understand.

For example, a substantial number of Africans believed that success could be achieved by the secrets of African magic. In other words neither skill and education, nor stealing and running shebeens were enough to fend off want and degradation. Old Zimbabwe and modern Rhodesia came face to face. White people, if they thought about it, called such practices primitive superstition. But by intensifying the black man's hardship, they were in fact the chief devils in this world of dark magic. There seems to be a clear link between racial oppression and the degree to which superstition, voodoo and witchcraft flourish.

Among the so-called 'loafer' element in the Harare community were numerous people who earned their living as *nganga*, *chiremba*, herbalists and other people of that sort. Their superficial image was different from the one I had seen when I was young and living in Mashonganyika village. The *nganga* did not strut about in Harare dressed in bird's feathers and bushy animal tails as they once did in the villages. In fact one well-

known *chiremba* won first prize on several occasions for being the best-dressed man and dancer in the Harare monthly competitions. But, while adding a superficial touch of modernity to their art, these people hardly altered the traditional science of healing. Herbal roots, leaves and animal fats were still the basic ingredients of their medicines. In many cases the same old *hakata** with the same old names such as *chitokwadzima chine ngwena* and *nhokwara inamaviri*, which they clacked together and threw on the ground to sort out the problems of their clients were still in use. But something of a breakthrough was made in what had been the unchanging approach of the African healer when in the late 1950s a man named Gombera prevailed upon his colleagues to form the Mashonaland Herbalists' Association. While they did not reveal their knowledge to one another, at least, for the first time in remembered history, they recognized that they were public servants and needed to adopt a code of conduct which was beneficial to the general African public. It was a revolution, for which Dr Parenyatwa, a local African, trained in Durban, South Africa, deserves initial credit, for it was he who influenced Mr Gombera to organize the others.

However, the Harare medicine men mainly specialized in the unknown. These people claimed that they could bring luck, popularity and wealth to their clients. They were able to scatter enemies, remove evil spells and influence the attitudes of neighbours or workmates. Thus a hostile employer could be made kinder and even to increase a salary; a judge, magistrate or policeman could have his mind manipulated so that he dismissed a case for which a man stood to get a heavy sentence. If a business was declining and even going to pieces it could be saved by the right sort of *nganga*. If a boyfriend or husband was in danger of being stolen by another woman, he could somehow be made to see the error of his ways. There was no benefit that they could not confer on their clients, they claimed. Even some politicians did not hesitate, when all else had failed, to seek out this fascinating and mysterious community. Even certain sections of the white community in Salisbury went to them.

A South African publisher, Mr J. Bailey, used to pass through

* Pieces of wood or bone marked with symbols, which were known and interpreted by the medicine men.

Salisbury from time to time and whenever possible I used to take him around to meet some of the interesting personalities of all races in this city. I remember him observing on a number of occasions that our society seemed spiritually more mature than that of South Africa, particularly Johannesburg. I agreed with him. One could go to any part of the township by day or night and feel as safe as we used to feel in Chishawasha. Street lights were few and far between, in fact most areas were in total darkness, except for paraffin lamps or candles lighting the houses. Yet somehow there was a tacit agreement that individuals should be able to walk about in safety, free from fear of violence. Occasionally some unemployed men were caught in *MaOld Brikisi* and *MaJubeki* trying to burgle certain houses. But in each case the community was so incensed that the poor fellows were severely manhandled. In the nine years that I lived in Harare only once was I the victim of a theft and it was a shirt my wife had left to dry on a line behind our house. Otherwise, except for the occasional hazard, such as the mass hooliganism that broke out in the 1948 strike, one felt that on the whole Mr Bailey was right.

But as a journalist and observer of the community, in time I began to detect a creeping change towards violence, not only between black and white, but also among the Africans. Poverty was forcing us to turn against one another and increasingly put our faith in the power of magic. Whereas the lot of white people could be improved by technical and academic education, and good jobs, ours seemed unalterable. Consequently, our spirit turned more and more to destructiveness and we began to accept the doctrine that blood would inevitably be spilled as the price of freedom. Such was the awful promise held out to us by the so-called Western Christian civilization.

It was not my intention originally to live and work in Salisbury. I had planned to leave again in February, 1946, for Basutoland, where I intended to take a degree in history at the newly established University College of Roma. But I sorely needed pocket money and so decided to work during the month of January. Fortunately, African Newspapers required a proof-reader. I was taken on by Mr Cedric Paver, the managing director. He had come up from South Africa in 1943 to launch the *African Weekly* as well as to manage the *Bantu Mirror*, which was established by his Johannesburg-based elder brother, B. G. Paver, in the early 1930s in Bulawayo. At the end of January when I was about to part company with African Newspapers and start making preparations for my journey to Roma, Cedric Paver talked me out of my plans. His main line of argument was that journalism offered more opportunities than teaching, then the only worthwhile profession open to an educated black person. He was so convincing that I accepted his advice.

From the time that Cedric Paver was sent to Rhodesia by his brother to set up the company in Salisbury in 1943 to the year 1962, African Newspapers were very much an established feature of the Rhodesian Press. But when the Rhodesian Front came into power, the African Press, as it became popularly known, was doomed. When he succeeded the late Winston Field, Ian Smith found its daily, the *African Daily News*, a thorn in his régime's flesh, and banned it. At this point the company, which had by now been taken over by Thomson Newspapers, decided to close down. It was a tragic loss to the country as a whole, for it left the five million black people without an outlet to reflect their national life and point of view as widely as the African Press had tried to do.

The African Press employed scores of part-time correspondents and stringers living and working in places as far away

as Cape Town in South Africa, Mbeya in Tanganyika and Nairobi in Kenya. These people made the organization, with its many papers, a fairly comprehensive mirror of the revolution that was taking place in Southern, Central and East Africa between the late 1940s and the 1960s.

Secondly, it offered full-time employment to a lot of printers, machine-minders and local writers who would otherwise have remained anonymous; they were taken on irrespective of their tribal origins, provided, of course, that they were capable journalists. Thus there were people on the staff from the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. The effect of this structure was to make this group of newspapers, when the Federation came, the one institution in all Central Africa where there were concrete signs of interracial co-operation as opposed to the paternalism and master-and-servant cult which prevailed practically everywhere in colonial Africa.

This racial participation, plus the fact that the majority of our readers were black, was why the establishment was called African Newspapers. Otherwise the capital, ownership and management of these papers, which at the time I left them in 1959 amounted to eight, were entirely white. Until the 1950s, they were controlled from Johannesburg, where B. G. Paver ran the *Bantu World* on the same mixed black-and-white lines.

Cedric Paver, born a South African, was in many respects several years ahead of most white Rhodesians. He was flexible, sympathetic, communicative and very conscious of the need to build up a lively and informative African Press. Thus, apart from the obvious stresses and strains of working together in a society riddled with racial restrictions and frustrations, I found him a pleasant person to struggle with in running these papers. I also learned a great deal from him. Along with some of my African colleagues, I sometimes judged him harshly, but this was more out of frustration than out of conviction. From time to time some of us felt so strongly that we wanted to use the papers as dynamite with which to explode our rotten society, but of course, Paver could not possibly allow this to happen, accountable as he was to the shareholders of the company. It was then that the African staff made him the target for our attack against his world. But somehow we managed to agree that our overriding consideration should be to keep the African Press going, for it was doing an enormously important

job, not only in reflecting African opinion, but also in exposing the abject conditions of many of our people and the abuses of power by the hundreds of white bureaucrats, who ran our lives. Certainly for me, to maintain the existence of these papers was a strong enough objective to make it worthwhile suppressing most of my angry feelings against the many injustices in our society.

The Editor of the *African Weekly* in those early days was Elias Mtepuka, who came from the Likoma Island of Nyasaland. He was, without question, the most able editor of his time. He used to write florid, but strongly critical editorials, for which Cedric Paver was often rapped on the knuckles by the Chief Native Commissioner.

Before it was moved to Salisbury, the *Bantu Mirror* was described by the then Editor of the *Bulawayo Chronicle* as a bad digest of his paper. In spite of Mtepuka's talents, the *African Weekly*, I found, followed more or less the same tradition. Every morning, I noticed, he would make sure that no one deprived him of his privilege to read first our copy of the *Rhodesia Herald*, white Salisbury's main daily, which he then mutilated by cutting out all the articles he wished to reproduce. These he pasted on clean sheets of paper and under headings and introductory paragraphs of his own. By this procedure, the finished product made the *African Weekly* just as much a bad digest of the *Rhodesia Herald* as the *Bantu Mirror* was of the *Bulawayo Chronicle*.

As soon as I had settled down and felt that I was an integral part of this establishment, I decided to alter this situation by gathering our own news from the African community. Fortunately, I received every encouragement from Cedric Paver, who, particularly at the beginning, had to bully Elias Mtepuka into using my articles instead of those pinched from the *Rhodesia Herald*.

I used to deal as quickly as possible with all the desk jobs and then go out for the rest of the day in search of original news, particularly in the Harare location. I soon discovered that good human stories were as easy to find as tomatoes at the local market. The evenings and weekends produced enough topics and events to occupy all the available reporters in Salisbury, for it was at such times as these that this township exploded into every kind of activity, good and bad. It was up to me to choose

which dance, which meeting or which drinking joint I should attend. There I managed to ferret out some gossip, some expression of opinion or incident which might contribute to a tale that the African people, even perhaps some settlers, could find interesting to read. In this way, slowly but surely, the *African Weekly* ceased to be dependent on the *Rhodesia Herald* and acquired a distinct image of its own, while the Harare location emerged into the open as the true pulse of African social and political life.

Whenever possible, I wrote these articles in both Shona and English in order to cater for all sections of the African reading public. These pieces varied in content and were not purely political, as had been the tendency before, not only making the paper dull, but also narrowing its reading clientele. I also created special comic features. The one in ChiZezuru was called *Magaisa IBenzi*, that is to say, 'The Eccentric Magaisa', a character through whom I was able to tell my people some unpleasant truths about themselves, which they would not otherwise have stomached. It proved to be the rage of our readers, both in the town and the country, some believing that Magaisa was real. In English I created *Zinwambanje*, the 'Opium Drinker', which also, but in a more sophisticated way, tried to poke fun at Rhodesian society. I got the impression that it appealed more to the few white people who read the *Bantu Mirror* than to the Africans generally. But due to pressure of work, I had to give up *Zinwambanje* in the end, while *Magaisa IBenzi* went on, even after I had left the organization.

Through such tricks we whetted the African appetite for reading their own papers, and also, contrary to my political outlook, led the people of Harare to develop some pride in their township. As the years went by we laid bare the poverty and the maladministration of this black area and so forced those who controlled it to make improvement.

As Mr Paver took more people on the editorial staff, I was gradually relieved of hum-drum desk jobs and found more and more time to develop this method of gathering news. Later I extended my activities to other places, such as Gatooma, Que Que, Gwelo and Bulawayo.

In those early days, a black newspaper reporter was a freak to most white people in official positions and my efforts to extract information from them required considerable patience,

diplomacy and subterfuge. How I managed to come to terms with the arrogance, bigotry and, often, insolence of some of them surprises me today.

I must recount a particular trip I undertook to a place outside Salisbury. This was to Norton, about twenty-four miles away west of the city. There a group of white farmers, realizing the importance of a contented, stable native labour force, had hit upon the idea of a joint welfare programme for their Africans. When I arrived I found myself the guest of a Mr and Mrs Beveridge. Apparently my hosts had expected their guest to be a white man, not being aware that enough progress had been made in the country's educational system to produce natives who could work as newspaper correspondents. Accordingly, they had reserved an extra place at their table for lunch. My appearance was therefore no small surprise, and, naturally enough, upset their feeding arrangements, which the African cook was instructed to alter. They then asked their senior African employee to see that I was fed and looked after properly.

Afterwards, I was taken round to see what these farmers were trying to achieve in the fields of African housing, education and entertainment. The mad rush of black people to the towns was hitting all the farmers very hard and those in the Norton area were trying to solve the problem by a liberal approach. I visited several homesteads in this rich agricultural country, where the main crop was tobacco. There, I met for the first time the Palmer brothers, Eric and John, who were among the wealthiest farmers in the country, but distinctly different in outlook from most, as they demonstrated in 1957 when they stuck to Prime Minister Garfield Todd, while the rest of his Party and Cabinet rebelled against him because of his liberal speeches.

Back in Salisbury from this assignment, I wrote pages and pages in praise of what the tobacco barons of Norton were trying to do for my people. I would write quite differently today, but at the time I was more 'understanding' and did not take my political animosity too much into account.

But, judging by what has since happened in Rhodesia and the rest of Africa, the Press enjoyed then a freedom that looks positively utopian today. Indeed, the very conditions of discrimination and racial injustice under which we lived made Rhodesia rich in opportunities for any ambitious, but diplo-

matic reporter, especially a black one. Provided you did not deliberately and openly incite people to rebel or break the laws of the country, you could dig up any unsavoury facts about their social environment or express any unacceptable political point of view. You might make yourself unpopular as I did any number of times, but at no time did the Government clamp down on these papers or their African staff. We had, of course, to exercise our own form of censorship but there is no doubt that what we got away with would be regarded as inconceivable to any journalist almost anywhere in Africa today.

As the years rolled on, Mr Paver took more African people on the editorial staff, among them men of considerable stature in the Rhodesian black community. There was, for instance, Jasper Zengeza Savanhu, soon to be lured into politics by Huggins when he achieved his dream, the Federation. There was also Michael Masotsha Hove, and he went on to represent Africans in the Federal Parliament.

Savanhu began his public life as a firebrand, who during the Second World War stirred the Africans and scared the Europeans, with his cutting indictment of the system, and called for a strong Congress movement. Later he was struck down by tuberculosis, for which he had to have his affected lung removed, which put a stop to his carpentry profession and his means of earning an independent living. Cedric Paver, who admired his intelligence, persuaded him to join his staff. This meant toning down his political fervour, which he did, so that in the end he was so changed as to be the object of some African antagonism. All the same, he was elected an M.P. and eventually became a Junior Minister in the Federal Government—the first black man in Rhodesia to rise so far. But with the death of the Federation, this man, who could have had the chance to serve his country with distinction, was dumped on the heap of anonymity.

Michael Masotsha Hove came to African Newspapers via the teaching profession, as most of us did. Highly impressive-looking and persuasive of manner, Hove was installed as editor of the *Bantu Mirror* while Savanhu, shortly afterwards, was made editor-in-chief of these papers. Both of them brought new talents and a new dimension to African journalism, so that in the course of a few years, we became a voice to be respected.

But of the two, Hove was the less complicated and the

Federal Government did not have any doubts as to his loyalty when he became an M.P. In fact, Sir Roy Welensky made him the Federal High Commissioner in Nigeria. But he too, like so many others at the death of the Federation, disappeared from politics and took a job with the Native Administration of the city of Bulawayo.

Other African writers, the majority younger, more sophisticated men, came on. One of these was Mr Solomon Dwittie, a relative of mine. He was very intelligent, had a good knowledge of English and a flair for journalism. He had started his working life as a police constable in Salisbury and was rapidly promoted to the detective branch of the B.S.A. Police. After many years of service in this force, he decided to improve his education and followed me to St Francis College, Mariannhill, Natal, where I was studying for the University of South Africa's Matriculation Certificate. He was taking the junior certificate and, living together as we did for a year, I realized how talented he was. When he returned from South Africa I urged him to write, rather than return to Government service, which I regarded, with good reason, as a corrupting process. He followed my advice and became one of the most effective writers that the African Press employed at the time. He knew a good deal about legal matters, the courts, the police and crime detection, which was useful. When Cedric Paver started the magazine, *Parade*, of which I was the first editor, I encouraged Solomon Dwittie to write stories about some of the more unusual, real-life criminal cases that he had come across during his time in the police service. This he did over a fairly long period and his accounts helped me to make the *African Parade*, as we called it, as entertaining as possible. Solomon had a shrewd and penetrating mind, but the many years that he had spent enforcing law and order and in crime elimination had not only made him almost totally apolitical, but had also bred in him the tendency to see only the negative side of human nature. He subsequently left to become a probation officer.

Then came Philip Mbofana, who had trained with Mr Alvoord as an agricultural demonstrator to teach Africans in a practical way how to farm and use their land efficiently. Mbofana impressed us at the African Press with his many articles on all aspects of agriculture. He was educated in a different way from many of us, and believed with a fierce

conviction that the dignity and prosperity of his people lay in the land and its proper utilization. He was himself an effective instrument in putting into effect these objectives. He sent us graphic accounts of the agricultural shows and the prize-giving occasions when the African master-farmers in the places he worked were rewarded for their successful efforts.

Paver appreciated the vital importance of the food-growing industry and the vast productive capacity of the black people of Southern Rhodesia in such crops as maize and small grains. Thus was born the idea of launching forth a special agricultural journal for our people, which we christened the *Harvester* or *Mukowhi*, to which Mbofana contributed frequently. Eventually, Paver prevailed upon Mbofana to join the African Press, which he did with considerable misgivings, not only because he was such a dedicated man in his work, but also because he was giving up a life that carried much prestige and personal satisfaction. However, Mbofana agreed to come and proved a most valuable acquisition, particularly in the Shona news and feature articles. A Shona himself, he wrote extremely well in the ChiZezuru dialect and greatly improved the quality of the *Harvester*, of which he became editor.

Shortly after Savanhu left to become a Federal M.P., I had the impression that the managing director wished to appoint Mbofana to be his successor as the editor-in-chief of African Newspapers instead of myself, as he did eventually, and I believe reluctantly. Philip Mbofana was older, less complicated and political than I. He did not project a point of view which could have put Mr Paver in conflict with the highly sensitive Native Affairs Department. He would have been the ideal executive for the organization, in the prevailing climate of opinion.

My politics and temperament, on the other hand, were of a different nature. Although by the 1950s I was the most experienced candidate for the job, I was politically suspect. I mixed with all classes of African society and enjoyed myself everywhere. On at least two occasions I nearly got the sack. The first time was in 1947 when I did not join the African crowds who congregated to greet King George VI and his family during their visit to Rhodesia. This was not because I had anything personally against the royal family. But I was just extremely angry at the misuse of the King's power and justice by his white citizens in Rhodesia. When Paver received news of my absence

from this royal occasion, he probably concluded, but of course mistakenly, that I was under Moscow's influence. However, I was not alone. Mtepuka also boycotted the event and at the time we happened to be almost irreplaceable. Paver was angry and said that we could be dismissed for such a demonstration of disloyalty. The next occasion I got into trouble was when I became involved, all the way to the Prime Minister's office, in speaking on behalf of the Africans of Salisbury in their 1948 general strike. In this case, I learned that my employer had been accused by the then Chief Native Commissioner, of harbouring a Communist. At any rate that is what I gathered from my parish priest, Father Henry Swift, of St Peter's Mission, who called me one day outside the church and, without sugaring the pill, simply said: 'The Government has said you are a Communist.' My reaction was simply to say, 'So what?' But I certainly took seriously the attitude of my boss, which was tantamount to saying that I could go and would not be missed by the African Press. However, I survived. Mr Paver's injunction was simply that, as journalists, we should be impartial chroniclers of events rather than their initiators. Of course, this was easier said than done and he knew it, which is why, I am sure, he put up with people like me and others, some of whom were even more argumentative and rigid, politically, than I was. Certainly since his arrival from South Africa in 1943 this man had had an unenviable task in the face of the attitudes of white officials, who suspected that these papers constituted the biggest nest of black subversion in the country.

There was another occasion when Paver was put under pressure to do something about the nuisance I was supposed to be creating, but, in this case, he dismissed the matter as unimportant. This directive came from the head of the Municipal Native Administration Department, who is now a Rhodesian Front Member of Parliament. It was put to Paver that there was a Catholic conspiracy, revolving around Charles Mzingeli and Lawrence Vambe, to undermine and bring into disrepute the work of the department in Harare. This was because Mzingeli, through his Reformed I.C.U., and myself, as a journalist, took complementary roles in exposing the congestion, the restrictions, mass arrests and other burdens under which the African people suffered in the township. I had revealed incidents of wholesale prostitution that were taking

place at the Masaka, which created the impression among the white citizens of Salisbury that the Native Administration was not carrying out its responsibilities properly. On numerous occasions I had coupled such reports with hard-hitting editorials which laid the blame exactly where it belonged, on the Salisbury City Council.

Thus my indiscreet views were not such as to make me an esteemed editor-in-chief in official circles. Besides, as I have already said, I mixed with all kinds of common people and even gained the reputation for drinking too much. I always encouraged the people of Harare to enjoy themselves, and apparently thereby conveyed the impression that I was promoting moral corruption among them. However, despite these stains on my character, I was eventually installed in the chief editor's chair, only to elicit from some of my own fellow men the charge that I was a stooge.

Outstanding among the many younger journalists who came to African Newspapers during the late 1940s and 1950s, were Nathan Shamuyarira and Willy Dzawanda Musarurwa.

Nathan Shamuyarira came to the African Press via the Domboshava Government School, where he was teaching. He made an immediate impact on everybody in the newspaper establishment. He was as good a writer as he was a logical, persistent and lucid debater and conversationalist. He had a doggedness and stubbornness all his own, which made him a valuable asset to our team. Always a serious-minded man, Nathan seldom allowed anything that he had written to be altered. He had a meticulous regard to facts and detail, and his editorial comments forced people to take definite sides. Indeed, when the Federation became well established and, particularly, when the *Daily News* came into being, a substantial section of the white citizens of Salisbury took pains to find out what the African Press was saying. What Nathan wrote usually struck a distinctive note in their minds, even if his name was a mouthful to some. In other words, here was a writer whose calibre and force of argument most people recognized, and who enhanced greatly the quality and reputation of these papers.

Between Shamuyarira and myself there was what I would like to think of as a healthy balance of approach to the overall responsibility we carried. He, being younger than I was in

years and in terms of political journalism, was more militant against our system. But I, having by then gone through so many travails, looked to the future of the institution which gave us the scope to serve our people, and preferred to attack the system within certain limits without driving its manipulators to resort to the complete destruction of this Press, as the only answer to their problem. I know that I exasperated Nathan from time to time by this difference of approach and especially by using the executive power I had to overrule him on occasions. But somehow we managed to work together smoothly and effectively and consolidated this institution.

However, the political clouds continued to gather and to cast darker and darker shadows over Southern Rhodesia. I left the newspapers at the end of April 1959 and it was logical that Nathan should be my successor. He was thus fated to witness the physical confrontation that came about later between the Rhodesian Front and the *African Daily News* when the pretence of partnership of the races was no longer tenable, so riddled was society with injustice.

Almost as brilliant a writer as Nathan Shamuyarira was Willy Dzawanda Musarurwa, a graduate of Waddilove and an ex-schoolmaster, who must have been a great loss to the African teaching profession when he became a journalist. He was born in the Zwimba Reserve of an extraordinarily talented family (one of whom was the famous musician whose composition was taken up by Louis Armstrong). Although I only worked with Willy for a very short time before I left the Press for the Federal Civil Service, he made a great impression on me. He was a masterly reporter, sub-editor and leader-writer, who wrote lucidly and in graphic but beautiful English. What is more, Willy was a hugely attractive person in the sense that, although he had strong opinions, he was flexible, tactful, and full of sympathy and humour. Although he did not drink or smoke, because he was a strict Methodist, he had a tolerant attitude to those who did. And although he was highly principled politically, he made allowances for those who held different opinions. All in all, he was a very cultured man and one in whom I saw no desire for personal gain in any cause he took up. Thus when he decided to enter full-time national politics by joining the National Democratic Party and later Z.A.P.U. he was one of those who did a great deal to attract

men and women into the organization which they had shunned before because they were dismayed by the seeming intolerance of some of its leadership.

However, Musarurwa's writing profession did not last long. When I left the country in 1959 the atmosphere in Rhodesian racial politics was becoming hotter, and he came to the conclusion that to go on working at the Press was flogging a dead horse. And so he decided to cross his Rubicon. On returning to Rhodesia in 1962 I found him serving as one of the members of the Zimbabwe Caretaker Council, which was formed in that year after the ban on the National Democratic Party by the Whitehead administration. But his attempts at building up the Zimbabwe African People's Union were cut short when in 1964 the Front régime threw him into the Gonakudzingwa detention camp which he has only recently been released.

Before I parted company with the Press in 1959, ours seemed to be a reasonably durable journalistic fraternity and the African Press itself an indestructible edifice, which our country, if it kept what sanity it possessed then, would cherish and encourage. Although there were ominous signs of sinister things to come, I took an optimistic view as far as black writers and these newspapers were concerned, and felt convinced that they would be able to ride the storm. I was entirely wrong.

I have already referred to the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act. It is now time to discuss this piece of legislation. Apparently, the Prime Minister had anticipated the rush of Africans into the towns after the war. He had foreseen that such an invasion, while bringing plenty of cheap labour, would at the same time create problems unless there was the necessary legal machinery to deal with the situation, for the Land Apportionment Act was too loose and too general for this purpose.

As usual, the African people were not consulted or given so much as a hint of what the Government intended to do in giving more bite to its segregation policy. My people generally were left to entertain the false dream that when Hitler was defeated they would enjoy greater freedom. Otherwise, the Africans reasoned, why should they be patriotic, and give their cattle, money and indeed their blood in the struggle against the man they called 'Hitira'?

But the moment of truth came early in 1946 when the Prime Minister tabled a new Bill in the House, by which all hell was let loose among the native population. And surprisingly a great many influential white town councillors were also stung into opposition, but for entirely different motives. At any rate, a militant, if unholy, alliance was temporarily forged between these two and blazed into a fierce battle.

The gist of the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, passed in the Rhodesian Parliament and, approved by the British Government in the same year, was simply this: to strengthen the Land Apportionment Act, by compelling the local authorities to set aside more urban land for the occupation of employed Africans, forcing employers to provide and pay for the accommodation of their African workers in black townships instead of housing them in makeshift huts on land intended for white residential and business

purposes, and devising more effective methods for controlling the movements of all natives, including their wives and children.

The white Councillors of Salisbury and Bulawayo joined the affray with fierce vehemence. They were quick to point out that they could not support the extra burden of administering this legislation. They were appalled at the notion of taking more white land for African occupation. They argued, as did the leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Smit, that there were already far too many black people in their towns and that this prospective law would simply encourage more 'boys' and their idle relations to flock into the urban areas.

Huggins demolished all these arguments with what became a classical statement in Rhodesian politics of that period. Speaking like an angry patriarch to his foolish and ungrateful followers, he told the Rhodesian Parliament that in this measure he was trying to give the Europeans a 'flying start' and if they did not take this chance they would only have themselves to blame. It was a grave warning and they understood, just as we understood, what their leader meant. Thus their dissenting voice petered into silence and consent.

The African campaign, however, was more substantial and more sustained, for, in spite of its few advantages, this new act was intended to intensify racial segregation. Coming as it did at a time of euphoria fermented by the platitudes of Allied war leaders, this step seemed a breach of faith of the gravest kind. It brought about the first and most serious clash between the settlers and the native people in post-war Rhodesia. Understandably, this began in the Harare Native location, and went on there for several months before it spread to other towns in the country.

Charles Mzingeli was now fully politically regenerated and in effective control of the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. He it was who sounded the warning drums and rallied the people of Harare to the battle arena as Huggins announced his Bill.

As I remember, this opening clarion call was made at a mass meeting hastily convened at the Harare 'Musika' on a Saturday afternoon. Militant speeches were made, the iniquities of the Bill were spelled out and denounced, while the contrasting text of the Atlantic Charter was referred to again and again. This was an historic rally, which ushered in a new phase in the

conflict between black and white Rhodesians who only a few months before had together been celebrating the defeat of Nazism. The men and women present were made to understand that they were facing a vicious new kind of racialism from a Government whose spokesmen had paid lip-service to the cause of justice, freedom and the brotherhood of man during the previous five years. The fury of the Africans knew no bounds and I found it almost impossible to convey their real mood in the Press reports that I made on these and subsequent proceedings.

As the news spread, more and more rallies followed in rapid succession, each one more heated and dangerous than the last. These meetings and these moods were to go on for the next three years, but, of course, without effect.

A group of white Anglican women, on hearing the news of that first protest rally in Harare, rushed to the house of a well-known African, Aidan Mwamuka, and said to him, 'Look here, unChristian leaders are stirring up trouble. You ought to come out and counter this sort of thing . . .'

This attitude reflected the general feeling of most of the white 'liberals' and missionaries, particularly those in the Native Welfare Societies. I refer to such men as Herbert Carter, then the Chairman of the Methodist Churches in Southern Rhodesia, and Percy Ibbotson, then the organizing secretary of the Federation of Native Welfare Societies. Indeed, the latter was charged by the Prime Minister, to whom he was advisor in African affairs, to woo the black people to the acceptance of this measure. And Ibbotson, skilful political manipulator that he was, tried very hard to do just that up and down the country, but of course failed.

What particularly infuriated the Harare people was the subsequent decision of the Salisbury City Councillors. Once they had realized that they could not alter the mind of the Government and that they had the responsibility of trying out the Act first in their black township, they proceeded to hire a notoriously tough expert from South Africa to force it on us. This was an ex-detective, Graham Ballenden, then the Director of the Native Administration of the City of Johannesburg, where he had successfully, if with difficulty, implemented the equivalent South African legislation on which Dr Huggins patterned his.

In the settlers' view, the Shona were less aggressive than the

Ndebele who were more prone to violence. Therefore it would be prudent to enforce this law in Salisbury before Bulawayo. Salisbury councillors were generally unsentimental, while those of Bulawayo tended to be more sympathetic and cautious. Thus while in Salisbury they chose the unpopular Mr Ballenden to show them how to control their natives, in Bulawayo, they found a humane, liberal and scholarly man. He was Dr Ashton, also a South African, a trained sociologist of international distinction, who was to do everything he could, despite the harsh demands of the official policy, to make the lives of the Africans in Bulawayo as human as possible.

Mr Ballenden wasted no time in taking up his appointment amid great expectations from the white and the anguish of the Africans. His very presence, it soon became clear, had the effect not only of aggravating the anger of the Harare people, but also of shifting their venomous opposition from the Act, the Rhodesian Government and the Salisbury Municipality, to the person of Ballenden himself. His very name invited fear and hatred. Time and again he was threatened with violence at the Harare gatherings to which he had come in a vain attempt to calm my people. Each time they loudly told him to go back to Johannesburg, that abode of violence and savagery. A widely respected local inhabitant named Masere, called the city and the country from which this man had come *Nyika ye mapanga*, the place of knives. Indeed the police had to be employed to guard Graham Ballenden, for once or twice he had to be driven back to the city amid a hail of stones from the black people who loathed the very sight of him.

As it happened Ballenden spent most of his time in Salisbury stoutly defending his name and trying to convince black people that he was merely a hired man and not the architect of this law. 'Blame your Government for it and not me,' I heard him say times without number and often in the presence of Rhodesian officials, who looked chagrined and embarrassed. I noticed about him an air of injured innocence, implying that we were treating him unjustly. In fact so keen was he to appear a decent human being, that he sought to cultivate the personal friendships of some of our leaders such as Mzingeli. And as an olive-branch, he asked the City Council to change the name 'Native Location' to the 'Harare African Township', which sounded more respectable.

Throughout his stay in Salisbury as the Director of the Native Administration, Mr Ballenden faced every kind of opposition, and I do not doubt that he went back a wiser man as to the true character of the black people of Salisbury. The last chapter of his story was when he took the Salisbury City Council to the courts for not fulfilling some aspects of his contract, and won the case.

The fierce resistance elicited by the Act restored in my mind the faith and respect in my people which I had begun to lose, for it revealed so forcefully that the Africans of Harare were by no means permanently intimidated. These stormy confrontations, some of which nearly resulted in bloodshed and later spread to Bulawayo and other places, showed that these men and women, contrary to the calculations of Huggins and his advisers, were acutely aware of the injustices of the system, and would not take this new threat to their limited freedom lying down. They surged forward again and again in a common struggle to defend what few rights they had. I could not help but feel a new confidence in our common future.

Perhaps more revealing was the emergence from these rallies of many people as leaders, ready to fight to the bitter end. These individuals popped up from all classes of the community. But it was noticeable that the less academically educated men and women were more forthright than the *va ka funda* in the things that needed to be said, and therefore more effective in their message.

Probably the most outstanding of these so-called 'rabble-rousers' was Sam Nyamurova, whose house was in 8th Avenue in the married section of Harare and who was to be my friend and close neighbour for quite a time. He was born in the Hartley district and had a thorough knowledge of the history of his people in West Mashonaland, particularly about their role in the 1896 Rebellion. This knowledge, the result of his tribal teaching, became the basis of his political outlook. It made him vow that the one thing he was not going to do when he came of age was to pay the Rhodesian Government's Native Tax, which was £1 per annum. When the local Native Commissioner demanded it, the African told him that he had promised never to be a tax-paying black man. The official was shocked by this kind of talk from a native and threatened him with all kinds of penalties. But Sam did not budge from his

standpoint, whereupon he was imprisoned and beaten up. This went on for about six months, during which time he showed not the least sign that he was weakening in his resolve. The Native Commissioner finally accepted defeat, for this most unusual young man kept affirming the line that he was prepared to spend all the years of his life in gaol rather than pay money to the Government whose founders had stolen his country and killed hundreds of his people. However, Sam made a firm compromise with the Native Commissioner and promised not to tell any other Africans that he was exempted from paying his *mutero*. So he said.

Until Huggins set the emotions of the Harare people ablaze, Sam's background and political opinions were unknown to me. Except for his long, walrus moustache and somewhat flashy clothes, he was not, superficially, particularly impressive. But he shot to prominence immediately the Reformed I.C.U. meetings began. His inner fire was matched by his rich, deep voice, as he hurled threats and statements such as *rugare rwa kawora* and *vanhu vasina hanya* which, translated, meant 'this rotten society' and 'these heartless settlers'. When he turned to the use of English, which was limited, he used to mix up his words sometimes, saying, for instance, 'secretary weapons' where he intended to say 'secret weapons'. But in spite of these slips and other verbal antics, he made a powerful impact on his audiences, which greatly relished his contribution. As it was, this tempestuous situation in Harare provided Sam with just the opportunity he had been looking for to open up the old wounds inflicted on his people in the early days of Rhodesia and relate them to the events of these times. What we were going through, he stated, proved that there could only be an unending state of animosity between them and us as long as we did not have real power.

Naturally, the Rhodesian Government, which was kept fully informed of what was going on, reacted with various forms of intimidation, through the police as well as through Sam's employer. But none of them deterred his vehemence and courage. Thus the powers that be must have heaved a sigh of relief when some few years later Sam Nyamurova decided to quit Harare to establish a country store.

In more or less the same mould was Mr Muchenje, who came from the Chiweshe Reserve. Called, and rightly so, *murume ane*

hasha, the angry man, Muchenje, an idol among the township women, spoke as though his dearest wish was to be arrested and charged for his views. He refused to recognize that the white Government of Southern Rhodesia and the white City Council in Salisbury had any right to govern him. He likened them and their agents, the police, to blood-sucking mosquitoes, which ought to be crushed. And he went on to say that no black person with any self-respect should allow any policeman to come to his house to find out, as required by this law, whether his wife was 'approved' or not. *Ini ndino rova*—'I will thrash him', said Mr Muchenje. He did not care or fear.

Then, of course, there were the more staid people like Mr Masere, then in his late sixties, who earned his living by buying and selling second-hand furniture and clothes he picked up on Saturday mornings at the Salisbury open-air auction market. His view represented that of the older Africans—simple, dispassionate and conciliatory. *Ko chakaipa chiyi kuti vatema ne vachena vadyiro mundiro imwechete?*—'What is wrong with the idea that the black man and the white man should eat from the same plate?' If the two races wanted peace and understanding, then they should be prepared to live and let live, he said. In Mr Masere's view, an arrangement whereby a man, such as Ballenden, from *nyika ye mapanga*, a country where people had to use knives in their struggle for existence, was hired to teach the law-abiding Africans of Rhodesia to behave must surely be the product of mad minds. And, of course, he was right.

But sooner or later African fury went into the area of bad wages and the rising cost of living. By the beginning of 1948 this feeling had become explosive. This time the Africans of Bulawayo took the lead.

Matabeleland is a dry country and it has never been easy for the Africans there to make a decent living on the land. Therefore, paid employment has always meant more to the people living in Matabeleland than to those in Mashonaland, which usually enjoys good rainfall and, in consequence, produces the bulk of its own food. Naturally this harsh position of Africans in Matabeleland has bred in them a practical approach to labour problems. Fortunately for these people there were among them two fiercely nationalist personalities from Mashonaland who

were determined to achieve practical unity through trade unionism. One was Jasper Zengeza Savanhu, whom I have already mentioned, a self-employed carpenter from Salisbury and an uncompromising militant. Savanhu inspired the formation of the Bulawayo African Workers' Trade Union in 1945 and subsequently developed it into the Federation of Bulawayo African Workers' Unions. The other was dynamic, ebullient, twenty-stone Burombo, now dead, who came from the Fort Victoria district. Benjamin Burombo established in 1947 the British African Workers' Voice Association. Clearly the Bulawayo workers were better organized in this respect than those in Salisbury under Charles Mzingeli, whose approach was mainly political. And so it was that while we in Harare battled against the Urban Areas Act and its administrator, Ballenden, the Bulawayo Africans pinpointed their grievances to wages and confronted their employers with specific demands. The latter fended them off with various excuses. The leaders worked hard for patience and moderation, but the workers of Bulawayo grew tired of speeches. They opted for a strike on 14th April 1948. A few days later, Salisbury followed suit. And in a week or so every major town in Southern Rhodesia was in the grip of a general strike by every type of African, including the women who looked after white children.

In Harare everyone who had led the struggle against the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, including myself, was naturally caught right in the front line of this new confrontation with the settlers. We had made no specific plans for it. It just happened one Monday morning, and we were called upon by our people to lead them. We met outside the Harare Recreation Hall. Men and women from all the corners of the township came to support the strike and so many people were present that some had to climb the *minhondo* and *misasa* trees to see the speakers. The atmosphere was tense, the Africans were burning with the spirit of revenge and defiance, the causes of which went far beyond inadequate wages and other material deprivations. They were not prepared to listen to reason and moderation. They had tried peaceful protest but had got nowhere. This was why they, and not their leaders, had initiated this strike, and this time they insisted that they were going to lead the leaders instead of the other way round. Charles Mzingeli, in his constitutional approach, tried

to put it on a calm and reasonable level, but he was not only angrily shouted down, he was seized physically, lifted off his feet and made to give an undertaking that the strike would go on until the white exploiters had made the concessions demanded by the black people. The meeting went on all day and some of us feared violence might break out at any time.

Meanwhile, in white Salisbury there was an atmosphere of uncertainty, fear and, in some cases, panic. For the first time since the 1896 Rebellion, white people were compelled to swallow their pride and wash their own dishes, cook for themselves, empty their own dustbins, do their own shopping and collect their own letters. Meanwhile their black employees paced up and down the streets and loudly jeered at them. As I learned a little later, Europeans were forced to reappraise their Africans. Some began to respect the black man, while others were angry and petrified, wondering what the 'munts' could get up to next.

However, because of the general nature of the strike and the restrictions imposed on working Africans by the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934, it was difficult to reduce the heat to specific issues and negotiate with a specific body of employers. White employers would not concede that black workers had a right to negotiate for improved working conditions. Both the leaders in Harare, and the Government, were placed in the extremely difficult position of trying to calm down the crowds and at the same time reassuring them that their strike was not in vain. As each hour passed, more people came to join the protesting crowd. The Government had been quick to call in troops, who drove as many Africans as possible from the white areas to our township. Harare became a prison, as it was designed to be. On the second or third day of the strike the riff-raff took to violence and went on a campaign of looting and destruction, but the soldiers soon got the upper hand and stopped the vandalism.

It was somehow agreed that African leaders should open up a dialogue with the Government and, if possible, bring someone like the Chief Native Commissioner to Harare to hear at first hand what the Africans wanted done. We sent word to that effect, and the reply was that Mr Hudson Beck, the then Chief Native Commissioner, would most certainly not condescend to

speak to 'hooligans' in their location. However, he was prepared to receive a delegation of the so-called leaders.

It was then that several people, including Mzingeli and myself, were chosen to go and see this man. When we arrived at his office we found awaiting us not only Beck himself and some of his lieutenants, but also the Police Commissioner. A few minutes later, the Prime Minister himself strolled in and the talks began. In fact we were mostly lectured to, particularly by the Chief Native Commissioner, who used the word 'hooligans' again and again. Although he was supposed to be our supreme 'protector', he had the least sympathy for us.

Huggins, on the other hand, though paternalistic, looked at the situation in a more statesman-like manner. After pointing out the grave damage that the strike was causing to the economic life of the country, he said that whatever our grievances were, we had gone about things the wrong way. Then he asked us, one by one, exactly why the strike was on. We were also asked what should be done to make our people return to work. Mr Mzingeli suggested, and we endorsed his view, that someone like the Chief Native Commissioner, if not the Prime Minister himself, should come to Harare and talk to our people. Beck tried to refuse to do this, but Huggins ordered him to go. This he eventually did and for the first time in his official life met Africans who did not fear to express their feelings. They left him in no doubt as to their loathing for white rule in Rhodesia.

The Salisbury strike lasted four to five days, but in the end it turned out to be a blessing to the Prime Minister, who used it to show both the Africans and the settlers what a skilful politician he was. The Opposition Liberal leader, Mr Jacob Hendrick Smit, seized the strike as a stick with which to hit hard at the man whose office he wished to assume. These events, he boomed, were the result of the Government's misguided policy of liberalism. Communists and native agitators were being allowed to stir up trouble all over the country in order to bring about the breakdown of law and order, he said. He called for swift and effective punishment for the strike leaders. He ignored the mass of evidence in the Press of our efforts to avert this strike and to maintain patience and reason and, poised for power as he was, we feared the worst. He expressed perfectly the notion of many settlers that the happy native

should be protected from those who tried to sow the seeds of discontent.

But, to our great relief, Huggins took up a position which forced even us, who generally regarded him as our arch enemy, to accord him a good measure of respect. Far from being the work of Communists, he maintained, the strike was an economic protest. The Africans also wanted a place in the sun . . . We are witnessing in this country the emergence of a proletariat . . . This happened in Europe . . . The only difference is that in Rhodesia the proletariat happens to be black . . . This was a courageous thing to say for a man who had at the time such a slender majority. It consolidated his position. He won the next general election later that year with a large majority, while Smit lost his seat for good.

Immediately the strike was over, the Prime Minister appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by a judge of the High Court, Sir Robert Hudson. He also ordered the National Native Labour Board to go into the whole question of the wages of the urban Africans. (Native Labour Boards had been instituted by Huggins in 1947, following the recommendations of the Tredgold Commission of Inquiry appointed to deal with the grievances of the Rhodesia Railways African Employees Association, whose members had gone on strike in 1945.) In short, Huggins actually showed some sympathy with the African people and used the events of 1948 as the evidence he needed to convince white employers that these boards were necessary for the maintenance of healthy industrial relations in the rapidly changing conditions of Southern Rhodesia. To this limited extent, Huggins was a man of vision. Regretfully, his vision did not extend to the area of racial segregation and persuading his white electorate to discard this dangerous policy.

The general strike of 1948 made one thing clear: in the industrial sphere the Africans had a powerful weapon. But it was a very different thing to know when or how to use it. The leaders, though full of zeal and good intentions, were also hampered by their own jealousies and dictatorial instincts which continue to be the biggest enemies of black Africa. The masses lacked patience, which was so necessary if anything was to be achieved. As it was, the limited spate of violence that broke out in Harare made some of us, leaders of the community, fear for the safety of our families. In the event the behaviour of the

troops who checked it without firing a shot seemed highly commendable. But this civilized behaviour was not to be repeated by any future Government and its security forces, when dealing with striking Africans. In 1956 I witnessed, in horror, shame and anger, the troops of the Todd administration throwing tear gas into a peaceful gathering of Africans in Bulawayo who were deciding whether or not to strike.

In any case the economic conditions in Southern Rhodesia were such that for every available job in the towns there were probably a score of Africans ready to take it up. I saw throughout my years of residence in Salisbury dozens of the so-called *marova*, loafers, loitering all over factory, office and residential premises looking for employment. 'There is no work' said the notices, stuck on doors and gates in Shona, Nyanja and English by many employers, who wished to save themselves the bother of having to interview the hordes of job-seekers on the loose. As it was countless numbers of my people lost their jobs after the 1948 strike and they were not prepared to make such challenges again as spontaneously and massively as they had done then. The chastening lesson of this experience was therefore that, although we had this potent industrial weapon in our hands, its effective operation needed corporate discipline, judgement, tactical skill and unity.

My observation of these events toned down my previous optimism that we could win the battle for economic and political justice quickly for my people. We had struggled all through 1946, 1947 and 1948 against the Urban Areas legislation appearing on the statute books, but the Rhodesian Government remained impervious to our campaign, which was as constitutional and as orderly as we could make it. Our people, who had looked for positive results, then lost patience and went on strike. Admittedly, Huggins refused to pander to the extreme right-wing opinion held by Smit and his misnamed Liberal Party, but when all was said and done, his policy on the native question was clearly one of dictatorship, rather than one of consent and participation.

In what was a mild attempt to soothe our frayed temper, the Prime Minister gave the assurance that the new urban legislation would be implemented with compassion and humanity. But the truth was that by enacting this law at all he made our position considerably worse. Many of us, particularly the

educated people, could not go back to the Native Reserves or maintain two homes, one in the country and one in the town. We were an integral part of the urban environment. But there we had to put up with Mr Ballenden and his successor, Colonel George Hartley. Not only did they believe in segregation. They were also conscientious administrators, who set out to ensure that their Native Administration Department was efficient and effective. This meant that restrictions of every kind were imposed on all Africans, resulting in a continuous and relentless conflict between us and the administrating officers. Few black people could escape its strictures, which included such silly and unworkable provisions as that you could not live with your wife unless she was officially 'approved'. Many of the white men in the service of this Department were convinced racists, and by no means as compassionate and humane as Huggins had led us to believe. The Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act brought into action a huge number of snoopers and informers who went to the homes of white people to find out whether they were harbouring native men and women without authority and, if so, ordered them, by threat of prosecution, either to discharge them or house such servants in Harare or Mabvuku. And, even supposing that the particular native employee was legally permitted to live in the 'European area', it was required that the door of the house or room he occupied should not face the street. The same Department and the police were given powers to control the social habits of the people of Harare and Mabvuku. As an exercise in humiliation, this system was as perfect as any devised anywhere in the world.

The rulers of Southern Rhodesia went further in their measures against my people. South Africa passed the notorious Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. Shortly afterwards, Southern Rhodesia produced its own, but a much more comprehensive version. It was called the Subversive Activities Act, and by its terms Communist or any other forms of subversion, as interpreted by the Government and its legal officers, was a crime. Immediately, we saw it for what it was, yet another weapon against our campaign for equality and democracy. We fought hard to prevent Parliament from passing this draconian measure (which specifically provided that if any crowd did not

disperse a few minutes after being told to do so, the security forces were entitled to take any appropriate action). But the Government refused to listen to us and put the Act on its books. This was why soldiers were able to throw tear gas at the peaceful meeting I witnessed of Africans in Bulawayo in 1956. In 1951 we were again called upon to mount a prolonged struggle, this time against the Native Land Husbandry Act which the Government steam-rolled through Parliament without taking any account of the views of the African people.

In short, in all these years life in Harare went from one crisis to another, causing bitterness and hatred. At that stage it was not so much that we objected to racial segregation as to the obvious determination of the authorities to make our existence as harsh and anguished as possible. I remember Herbert Chitepo, the first Rhodesian African barrister, when he returned from England in the middle of the 1950s, saying: 'If they really want segregation, why don't they make it palatable by just saying "We Europeans will have all the north side of the Railway line and you Africans can have the south side" and then leave us to live our own way.' At that point I agreed with Chitepo.

The late General Smuts once said that the African had the patience of a donkey. If he had taken the metaphor a little further, he might also have concluded that when the donkey's patience is exhausted, it is capable of giving its tormentor a hard and painful kick. This was to be brought home to the Europeans of Southern Rhodesia in the late 1950s when my people discarded their peaceful, democratic ways. But for the time being, the trite boast of the settlers that they had not fired a shot in anger at the African held good.

Much has been written on the rise and fall of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, so I will not retrace the ground in detail. I did, however, take a minor part in this political drama.

I have always seen Huggins as a man of vision and a prisoner of white supremacy. He looked at British Central Africa just as Cecil Rhodes had done originally, in terms of unity and speedy development under white control. His efforts to amalgamate Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the late 1930s had failed abysmally, but he did not give up hope. When he emerged in the 1948 general election as the country's unchallenged political hero, Huggins understood that the situation was now in his favour and so set out to achieve the dream of amalgamation that the Bledisloe Commission had turned down a decade before.

To this end, he initiated in 1950 a series of discussions with the British Government, and the Federation came into being in 1953. The Africans of all three countries, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, opposed this development, even if we in Zimbabwe were rather less obdurate than our kith and kin in the now independent republics of Zambia and Malawi. Our view was just this: Southern Rhodesia had all the makings of a Fascist state, and we did not wish its extension to Lusaka and Zomba, where our fellow Africans appeared to have the prospect of attaining political independence. We said we would consider the Federation if Southern Rhodesia abandoned its native policy.

Our fellow men in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland refused right from the very beginning to admit that there was any virtue in the scheme. The rest of colonial Africa, particularly in the west, was moving unmistakably to the dawn of a new age, in which the black man would control his environment and his own future. The Africans in the two protectorates north of the Zambezi aspired for nothing less than this kind of destiny, with

all its uncertainties and its hazards, and they closed their ears to the sounds of the drums of partnership being beaten so loudly by Huggins and his supporters at Whitehall. But Huggins failed to understand this stirring in the spirit of the black man.

It was an interesting period. The settlers had refined their craft of political dramatics. The Confederate Party, which had supplanted the Liberal Party, provided the platform for white opposition to the Prime Minister. They were straight and direct, and played on the theme that Federation would lead to black domination. The charge forced the Huggins establishment to reassure the ever-fearful white electorate that this partnership policy meant nothing of the sort. Indeed, it was in something of a desperate effort to kill this interpretation that Huggins made what became the accepted definition of this new policy. He said that this partnership was like the one between the horse and the rider. 'And we are the horse,' cried out the Africans, feeling that they now needed no further proof of his true intentions. Also the Prime Minister never at any moment tried to hide the fact that Federation was intended to forestall the emergence of black states immediately north of Southern Rhodesia, and as this was the objective of most white settlers, they reasoned that whatever their leader meant by partnership he certainly would not wish to sell them down the river. So the majority preferred to follow him rather than the Confederate Party.

Most white Rhodesians also understood that the promise of partnership was the only means whereby the British Government could be persuaded to allow the formation of the Federation, but they would see to it that it remained a paper objective. One of my young reporters, Liwonde, came back very depressed from a meeting held in Highlands, the Prime Minister's constituency. The meaning of partnership had been discussed, and someone in the audience had pointed out that it implied the removal of racial barriers. Many of the fervent supporters of Sir Godfrey were outraged by the suggestion and cried 'Never' several times. It was clear that the settlers were determined to maintain their empire of white privilege.

I found that on the Federation issue the majority of the inarticulate Africans, far from being silently consenting or disinterested, as our rulers conveniently believed, could see the

sinister intent of this political creation. As for partnership, they did not believe it possible, given the long record of lying promises made by all white men. Thus, it was mainly the educated African who was prepared to discuss, reason out and look at the Federation in a spirit of hope.

The following incident shows the sceptical mood of the ordinary black people, whom the Native Commissioners regarded as children in need of the white man's guidance. Many will recall that in 1953 the big industrialists, in conjunction with the Government, staged what was called the Central African Centenary Exhibition, a publicity stunt designed to coincide with the Federation and to boost the economic prospects of this new state. The city of Bulawayo was chosen as the site of this show, which was impressive and embraced not only industrial achievements, but also the cultural aspects of this part of Africa. The majority agreed that the most arresting feature of this exhibition was the African Village. It was organized by a distinguished South African anthropologist, Dr Holleman, who had scoured the three territories and brought to Bulawayo an amazing congregation of African musicians, dancers and other artists, representing the various phases of our culture, both old and modern.

I was asked along as a writer, and while I was watching the fascinating show at the village, I was introduced to John Cranko, who was there with the Hallé Orchestra. Mr Cranko kindly gave me a free ticket to see *The Marriage of Figaro*, and I had to present myself at a certain time at the entrance of the hastily built opera house. As I had not eaten, I went for a light meal to a kiosk run by a European couple. I approached an African waiter at this stall and ordered a cup of tea and a sandwich. He listened without saying anything, and then rejoined the other employees. I heard him say with utter contempt: 'It's one of these foolish educated black men who believe that there is going to be partnership. He will learn now that these people want nothing of the sort.' They all laughed. And, indeed, when he told his employers that it was me who had ordered tea and sandwiches, the liquid was given to me in an empty can of beans.

I had, rightly or wrongly, long told myself that if I wished to keep on writing to influence public opinion towards a more desirable mutual existence, then I should ignore racial insults

of this kind. The people who discriminated against black men seemed so uncouth that I felt I would be debasing myself if I answered their behaviour with angry protests. Many other Africans shared this view. We saw nothing noble or civilized in shouting or protesting, and we generally kept our composure. I therefore made no fuss in this instance, but ate the sandwich, because I was very hungry, and simply put the tin down and left it there without drinking the tea. I told the African that I was not quite as naïve as he had made me out to be, and laughed. On this friendly note we parted company.

We enjoyed then what was, in comparison with later restrictions, a very free Press. In his twenty years of power, Huggins had firmly upheld the tradition that a free Press, however inconvenient, was an asset to a society that was prepared to change. So that with the coming of the Federation, the African Press and its team of black journalists increased in stature and influence. We were now universally accepted and respected as the chief interpreters of African opinion, as indeed we were. We reflected African life and culture as a whole. We could unearth and bring to the attention of the public the daily toils and tribulations of the ordinary African, whether in Harare or in Zomba, and act as a barometer to measure the steadily rising political temperature of our people. We were capable of conveying to thinking settlers what was going on in the black world from which they were otherwise so cosily shielded.

It was a wonderful period in which to be a newspaperman, and, despite our low salaries and the frustrations we suffered, I would not have wished to be anywhere else. In fact one even felt that segregation was to our advantage, for without the sharply divided spheres of responsibility that existed between us and the European Press, our scope and influence would probably not have been so great.

But such a position had its problems, the biggest one, I found, being the difficulty of trying to keep in step with the march of African nationalism. The attitude of our leaders simply amounted to this: if you claim to be a Press for black people, then you ought to speak for and back us up without any reservations. This was a tall order. Not only were we employed by an organization whose money and management were European. We were also at one time confronted by a multi-

plicity of black groups and black leaders who, while professing the same cause—African freedom—were fiercely antagonistic to one another. When we backed them all the way, we were hailed as comrades in arms. But when we criticized them, we were branded as imperialist dogs. I was once sent an anonymous letter, saying that I was a stooge and that, like all stooges, I would be punished dreadfully. The writer was ultimately uncovered and, to my distress, served a prison sentence. He was a young man, one of the thousands of educated Shona people who had come to Salisbury full of hope, only to find that, being black, they could make no progress. Consequently, he, like many others, was recruited into the growing black angry brigade, which had no patience with those who took a moderate line and toyed with the policy of partnership. As editor-in-chief, my position seemed a very powerful one and to some of my people it was logical that I should use it unstintingly against the oppressors.

However, on the whole both we at the African Press and the leaders of the various political movements in Central Africa recognized our complementary roles in furthering the cause of our people. The European Press, which had now awakened to the existence of African opinion, either ridiculed our leaders, minimizing their real influence, or made them appear more dangerous than they were. We tried to portray the nationalists in their real light, and were not afraid to point out their mistakes. Until I left for Britain in June 1959 my house in Highfield was open to all my friends and relations in the nationalist movement. There they met all manner of visiting journalists and others from abroad, particularly from Britain and America. I felt that in this way I was providing a bridge for white and black to come together. Individuals like Robert Chikerema, George Nyandoro and the late Leopold Takawira found the private atmosphere in my house and the serious, but informal discussions with these passing writers and academics, not only stimulating, but also a very useful way of making the African case better understood overseas. But, of course, white intransigence gave the African Press no choice but to move closer and closer to militant nationalism. When, later, he came to power, Ian Smith, unlike Sir Godfrey Huggins, Garfield Todd, Sir Edgar Whitehead and even Winston Field, found this intolerable and smashed up this organization.

With the formation of the Federation, we black writers tried to bring all the influence we could command on those in power to live up to their promises, for we realized that the success of this new state depended on the removal of all racial barriers. We attacked all symbols of apartheid. But the results of our efforts were minimal. All too often the Federal Government, when pressed to do something about segregated arrangements in Government buildings and restaurants and about the liquor laws, replied that these were territorial matters and that we had to speak to the Southern Rhodesian Government. But the latter was committed to the tenets of the Land Apportionment Act and answered that it could not alter this legislation without a mandate from its white electorate. When Garfield Todd took over from Sir Godfrey Huggins who went to the Federal Parliament, we entertained for a time the great hope that, with his liberal missionary background, he would tackle these injustices seriously. But we found that this very background made him suspect in the minds of the white electorate, and in order to maintain his shaky position, he had to be drastic in dealing with dissenting Africans. The planned strike by some of the Bulawayo Africans in 1956, which I have already mentioned, and the subsequent one at the Wankie Colliery, are cases in point. In both instances, Todd hastily sent in troops who acted with totally unjustified violence. He may have wished to stay in power long enough to be able to reform this society, as his liberal speeches indicated. But he only succeeded in frightening the people he led. In 1957 his ministers rebelled and a few months later he was thrown out of office. We at the African Press were horrified. We discarded our Cusual aution and lashed out. The rebel members of the Rhodesian cabinet were so concerned by our reaction that they arranged a special meeting for our senior staff. We met in one of the chambers adjacent to the Parliament building. There to talk to us were a group including Patrick Fletcher, Cyril Hatty, Ellman Browne, Abrahamson, Ralph Cleveland. These politicians, except Fletcher, were all successful industrialists, thoughtful and liberal by Rhodesian standards. In a session lasting over an hour, they tried, but without success, to convince us that the fact that they had gone against Todd in no way meant a move to the right in African affairs. The Prime Minister had been an authoritarian leader, who had not given them the normal

freedom to carry out their individual ministerial responsibilities. That was why they had decided to part company with him. Otherwise their views on African affairs had not changed. But we told them that we were not convinced by their explanation and left the meeting feeling gloomy and depressed.

This shows how important we were now considered as the shaping instruments of black opinion. We did not, of course, despair, for we realized anyway that Todd alone could not have emancipated us. But he at least had seemed to appreciate our aspirations, and this treachery against him undermined what confidence we had had in his colleagues. So, in spite of their assurances, we began to sound a more strident note than we had in the past.

However, the situation was not completely negative. By proclaiming a policy of partnership, Sir Godfrey Huggins, whether he realized it or not, seemed to be responding to the mood of the civilized world. Some people were so excited that they decided to settle in central Africa to participate in this hopeful experiment. Thousands of white men and women from South Africa, sickened by apartheid, crossed the Limpopo to live, hopefully, happily ever after in this new racial El Dorado.

As had happened in the immediate post-war period, many of these immigrants came to make their homes in Salisbury. This charmed city was not only the Federal capital. It also became the focus for international and local development finance. Once more there was a spurt of building. Fine residential homes and blocks of offices shot up everywhere, so that Salisbury looked more and more like an American city, with its skyscrapers, parking meters and large cars. Wages and availability of employment rose noticeably. And, despite our underprivileged status, we shared in this boom, whose base was the thriving copper business in Northern Rhodesia. Proof of this prosperity among my people was not only in the clothes and cars they bought, but also in their increasing ability to send their children to school, even university. In Harare and the Highfield Village Settlement I saw homes and businesses improved. Some people like Samuriwo, made a lot of money in the haulage business, especially at Kariba. The shebeens did a roaring trade and so did the prostitutes of Harare who got on famously with the Italians building the Kariba dam. From an economic point

of view, we could not dispute that things were better then than when Southern Rhodesia was on her own.

Many white immigrants tried to give partnership a boost. In my view Americans, all through this short-lived federal state, did the most to make partnership a practical reality. First there was Professor E. S. Munger from the University of Chicago, who during this period published 'Geography of sub-Saharan race relations' in *Africa Today* in 1955. Charming, intelligent and lacking reserve as so many Americans are, Ned Munger made more educated African friends in Salisbury during his spell in my country than any white person I knew. He disregarded most of the social conventions and invited people like myself to his house for supper and drinks. He also asked certain settlers and in this way made some of them realize that they only stood to gain by mixing socially with their fellow black countrymen. They actually discovered that not only could we talk about politics intelligently, but also about English literature, painting and music with quite as much understanding as they themselves had.

Then came American diplomats who threw large parties to which they invited as many black faces as white. Some settlers, particularly the older ones, at first frowned on these social sins, and cursed the 'bloody' Yankees. But others, once the bourbon began to flow, awoke to the fact that they were living in a multi-racial state, and began to converse with us.

One of the first of this breed of Americans was a Mr Hoover, who was full of good ideas. I heard him giving Rhodesian industrialists what I considered to be the best piece of advice possible. He was saying to them that by American standards they were still puny capitalists and would remain so unless they made use of their African people in the country. 'You need to see your black people as individuals who want to own automobiles, houses, and radios. Train them and pay them well and you can ignore the outside world . . . for you have enough resources of your own right on your doorstep . . . but you are wasting them.'

The Americans seemed to run things better than the various other embassies that descended on Salisbury with the start of

the Federation. Besides the head of the Mission (successively Lloyd Steer, J. Palmer and Guerin), those below him complemented his role by building up their own circle of friends, both black and white, and organizing lunches, dinners and cocktail parties. So far as we at the African Press were concerned, the most impressive section of the Mission was the United States Information Service, first under Ed Post and then Mark Lewis. They gave us the kind of attention we had never had from anybody before. We were inundated with news sheets and pictures from their office. When I started a cinema in Harare, as a side-line, and asked for some films I was told to choose from their huge stock. Nothing was too much trouble.

White Rhodesians did not particularly welcome educated Negroes into the country, but once the American Mission was established in Salisbury there was no way of stopping them. I remember several who came in during the first six years of the Federation. Two were very scathing about what they saw. One was Miss Jean Fairfax, a highly sophisticated girl from Cleveland, who, interviewed by a paper in Lusaka on what she had seen in Southern Rhodesia, declared that the only thing the settlers had was money in their pockets. Another was the Red Indian wife of a famous New York Negro sculptor and she was even more forthright, saying in my presence that white society in Salisbury was sickeningly rotten. While sounding like music in our ears, such comments goaded some of our white compatriots into vigorous bouts of anti-Americanism. Their attitude was that our system was a civilized one whereas that of the Americans was built on black slavery, and the near-extirpation of the Red Indians. Who are they to tell us that we are not treating the Africans right? they would ask with righteous indignation. In fact this attitude to the Americans was shared by some liberal white Rhodesians. Once, myself and a friend of mine were invited to supper by Mr Dobsavage, assistant to Mark Lewis, in order to meet his chief, Mr Damon, from Washington. I took this to mean that Mr Dobsavage had a special regard for my friend who represented the white Rhodesian Press and indeed was one of the best journalists in Salisbury. We were talking on the perpetual subject of politics, when, suddenly, my friend went into a diatribe against all Americans, saying that they were a primitive race, who had raped and savaged the Negroes and the Red Indian minority.

I was covered in shame. I apologized to Mr Damon for this uncalled-for attack. So did Dobsavage. But this rampant anti-Americanism was to culminate in incidents like the punching of Mr Mennen Williams, a U.S. Minister on African Affairs, by a white man in Lusaka in the early sixties.

However, the more white Rhodesians preached their dislike of Uncle Sam, the more some of us respected the Americans. It was not that we were unaware of the evils of the slave trade which had built the white South, or of the other injustices perpetrated against people of African descent, it was simply obvious that there were far more black doctors, scientists, teachers, missionaries, musicians, professors and indeed capitalists among the Negroes of the United States than anywhere in the rest of the world. Part of my political education came from the ideas of Negro figures like Dr DuBois, the father of Pan-Africanism, and other forceful black Americans. Naïvely or no, I came to the conclusion that there was something in the American system which accounted for this rate of progress by black people, for everywhere else our race was conspicuously and unnecessarily backward.

The British High Commissioner in Salisbury, Mr Rupert Metcalfe, and his staff also did their best to further the cause of partnership. But they were less bold than the Americans, partly, no doubt, because of their characteristic reserve and partly because they were possibly not so affluent. Like many other African journalists, I made several friends among them. They too, like the Americans, the French, the Germans, the Indians and many others, gave parties and dinners to which we were invited. In the end, one lived in a somewhat unreal world where one was caught up in convivial social rounds which went on almost day by day and week by week.

When all was said and done, this kind of hospitality tended to corrupt, for one was inclined to forget the thousands of black men and women living in squalor in Harare and other townships. And indeed some of us began to display those symbols of privilege—large new cars, dinner suits and starched shirts and collars. We could not possibly afford to return on the same scale the lavish hospitality we were given, but that was understood and accepted. However, wherever possible we not only asked some of these white friends and acquaintances to our homes and entertained them, but also introduced them to many

of those Africans they would not otherwise have met. We were breaking the laws of segregation, but we did not care. Once I took Mr Curt Strong of the American Mission, his wife and other members of his staff to the court of Chief Mangwende in the Mrewa district and heard them express their admiration not only for his magnificent physical appearance, but also for his intelligence and culture. This same Chief Mangwende was to be deposed and sent to a detention centre by the Rhodesian Government, because he refused to be a puppet. That was his crime.

From South Africa came a great many English-speaking immigrants, far more progressive in outlook than most local settlers. Lured by the promise of partnership, they discovered, however, when they arrived, that their new country was merely an extension of the land they had fled, complete with its black ghettos, separate hospitals, schools, restaurants and other familiar trappings of apartheid. They had been conned and many of them said so loudly. Nevertheless, they did what they could to inject some sort of practical reality to partnership and so, like the Americans, the British and others, they too invited Africans to their homes and joined the governing United Federal Party. Certainly from an intellectual point of view, Salisbury was all the richer for having this type of South African immigrant.

On the Rhodesian side, the then territorial Governor, Sir John Noble Kennedy, an impressive, tall, gentle man, did his utmost to set a good example in race relations, hoping thereby, no doubt, that his white subjects would follow him. Just before Federation, Sir John, who had succeeded Admiral Campbell Tate, the man who bequeathed a medical scholarship for Africans, started to invite Africans to parties at his residence in North Avenue. He was promptly attacked by members of the Confederate Party for breaking the country's law by offering liquor to the blacks. They alleged that their white supporters had been highly offended, and he had to discontinue this practice. Lady Kennedy threw herself heart and soul into the African women's club movement started by Mrs Helen Mangwende, the wife of the African chief I have just mentioned. But, being a mere constitutional figure-head, Sir John and Lady Kennedy's hands were tied, and there was little they could do openly to make this new policy a living reality.

The Federal Governor-Generals, first Lord Llewellyn and then Lord Dalhousie, also played their part, but it was just as limited. All the decisive cards were in the hands of the white politicians and the settlers of Southern Rhodesia, some of them in positions of power from which they successfully manipulated policies away from partnership. The Director of the Salisbury Municipal Native Administration, for instance, took great pains in his annual reports at this time to remind all concerned that Southern Rhodesia's was the way of race separation. Some of my liberal white friends were outraged by this, but he was in fact expressing the deep convictions of his fellow countrymen in all walks of life, men and women, who had no real sympathy with the federal concept and were to put the Rhodesian Front in power in December 1962.

In 1957 I was awarded a travelling grant to the United States and spent three and a half months there. The experience had a profound influence on me. I had seen the Federation as the only development which could prevent Southern Rhodesia under white rule from either being wholly swallowed by South Africa or becoming another permanently white fascist state. My trip to America broadened my vision of the Federation.

Everything in the New World was larger than the life I had known. What little men we all seemed in the African continent by comparison! Here was this colossal corporate state with its limitless productive capacity, which was reflected in millions of automobiles, huge cities and super highways, and a breathtaking galaxy of universities, libraries, museums and other institutions. The American, black or white, seemed much more purposeful and creative than the average African, black or white, was ever likely to be unless our stifling conditions were changed. In other words, I looked for the positive in the American system and found all the answers I needed for the development of Africa.

I began to grasp the possible deeper implications of what Huggins had done in uniting the three countries in Central Africa. Putting aside the problem of colour, whose manifestations I hated as much as any black man did, I saw that the Federation could be a precious gift to the black man. I was convinced that, given the opportunity, the African people could govern

both themselves and the white settlers justly and without discriminating against any minority. On the other hand, I was realistic enough to see that once in power and independent, the Africans in each respective state in Central Africa would be unlikely to sacrifice their parochial interests for those of greater unity and economic viability in a Federation of their own making. How much better, I told myself, for us black people, eight million of us, in the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland to accept the existing structure of the Federation and concentrate on the elimination of all its injustices. Win we must in the near future. In the end we would be in control of a huge African state with vast resources, copper in Northern Rhodesia, agricultural wealth, tobacco and secondary industries in Southern Rhodesia and the tourist attractions of Nyasaland. I even went further and considered the exciting possibility of a Central and East African political amalgamation or Federation, under black control, which would bring together approximately forty million people creating vast opportunities for human and material development.

Wherever I was given the chance, I spoke in this vein in America, but without in any way trying to gloss over the unsatisfactory nature of the existing power structure at home. The Americans did not need convincing on this score. Indeed, I found that I was preaching to the converted. I also, in trying to correct anti-colonialist Americans on points of fact and interpretation, became a stout defender of Britain.

My views must have reached the ears of those in power back home, for when I returned, after spending a month in England and a month in Italy, I was offered an M.B.E. which I accepted. This decoration was given for services to journalism in the Federation. In the same year, 1958, I was also invited, together with three white journalists, to accompany Sir Roy Welensky on his tour of Northern Rhodesia. Huggins (now Lord Malvern) had retired in 1956 and Sir Roy was now the Federal Prime Minister. This was my second trip to this neighbour country, the first one being in 1953, but only to Lusaka. On this occasion we visited Lusaka, Mongu, the capital of Barotseland, the Copperbelt, Fort Rosebery, Kasama, Abercorn and Mpika.

On both visits to this British protectorate I found discrimination against Africans abominable, far worse than it seemed in

Southern Rhodesia. In Lusaka and on the Copperbelt we came across big, coarse Afrikaner women in the shops, everywhere cursing and swearing at black people whom they served through hatches. They were delighting in calling my people 'monkeys', *bobojaans* and other insulting names.

Strange as it may now sound, throughout the life of the Federation we were told that we were streets ahead of the Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. We were better educated, better workers, and better farmers. Even the District Commissioners, who were certainly more enlightened than our Native Commissioners down south, agreed that this was true. But, of course, in doing so, they created in Northern Rhodesia a huge resentment against the Ndebele and the Shona, a resentment which was to take some time to eliminate. It was still so strong in 1963 and 1964 when I was working there, that some Zambians went about slashing the crops of black immigrants from Zimbabwe in places such as Mumbwa. At one time the authorities at the Nchanga Mines hospital sacked all the African nurses from Southern Rhodesia and sent them back in a single day. The local people said nothing.

This trip gave me the chance of getting to know Sir Roy. He was charming, human, approachable and, of course, astute. I could see that he was determined to make the Federation a success whatever happened. I was to see more of him in the times ahead. In 1959 I was asked if I would be prepared to give up my job with the African Press and become information attaché at Rhodesia House in London. I accepted the offer, believing that, although African nationalism in all the three territories was clearly determined to smash this structure, and all the governments had banned the congresses and detained their leaders, there was still a chance to get things right.

A poisonous campaign was mounted from a certain quarter against all successful Africans, such as the Federal M.P.s, Hove and Savanhu, and to a certain extent myself. We were branded as 'stooges', regardless of our past and present record in fighting discrimination and white supremacy in all its guises. In the case of Jasper Savanhu, this attack was so persistent and personal that the Federal authorities had secretly to give him a gun for self-protection, while I for a time came under police surveillance for my own safety.

Anyway, I refused to give in to the pressure, but, unbeknown

to my critics, the Rhodesian Special Branch did not trust me either, even as I was preparing to leave for London to serve the Federal Government. I only had to ring a friend on the telephone asking him to meet me at the now multi-racial Jameson Hotel in the city, and I would find there waiting in the lounge two or three detectives, who would sit as near as possible to hear what we were saying.

However, eventually, I flew out to London. It was early in June 1959. My task was difficult, but extremely interesting. Initially, I went all over the United Kingdom speaking to all sorts of groups and organizations. The Conservative Party seemed to find me a useful person to have at many of their constituents' meetings, while the Royal Commonwealth Society and other institutions arranged conferences for me at various schools. The Labour Party ignored my very existence. In Scotland most audiences were very critical. This was largely because of the attitude of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries were very much committed to the cause of the people of Nyasaland. Years later I wrote them a letter appealing for their concern and voice on behalf of my people in Rhodesia under Ian Smith. I received a letter, saying that as the Church of Scotland did not have any missions there they could not take up this cause.

People who remember some of the views I put across in this country will recall that I stressed the danger of white Southern Rhodesia falling into the arms of South Africa if she were not brought into the orbit of the north; that I advocated the removal of all racial discrimination, and that I urged the British Government to give the people of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland internal self-government as soon as possible, while forcing the settlers in my own country to grant us an increasing share in running it. I pointed out that a truly non-racial society in my part of Africa was crucial to the survival of the Commonwealth and the strengthening of ties between black Africa and the United Kingdom. I refused to be drawn into attacks on any black leader in Central Africa, for I knew only too well that it was not these people, but the system itself that was responsible for the state of turmoil and bitterness that had developed.

Some of the audiences at British universities were particularly difficult to handle. Black students at first automatically assumed

that I was a stooge. But I gathered that they were not so sure after they had heard me speak. A highly placed Federal civil servant, whom I helped to answer questions at a certain centre just outside London, was heard by someone to say that I was not the puppet he had thought I was before he had heard me speak.

Now and again, of course, I spoke too frankly and caused sparks to fly in the Federal Parliament in Salisbury. For instance, when, in reply to a question at a conference in the Westminster Hall, I said that I had no objections at all to marriages between black and white, Mr Winston Field, speaking for the Opposition, demanded in the House that I should be recalled. He was expressing the attitude of many white civil servants who took exception to my appointment. I noticed too at the time that there was one white journalist in the Federation who always managed to find something to write against me.

However, I had many friends both back home and in the United Kingdom, black and white, including nationalist politicians, particularly the late Leopold Takawira, who always came to see me whenever he was in London.

One day in 1959 Joshua Nkomo and I had a meal together in a small restaurant just off Trafalgar Square; it was an ideal opportunity to exchange opinions. I said that, while I admired his courage and supported his struggle for the freedom of all the Africans in the three territories, I was against breaking up the Federation altogether. Now that it was an accomplished fact, it would be sensible to concentrate on altering the balance of power between black and white for a large unified state was better politically and economically than three small separate countries. If the Federation was dismantled, the people of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland would attain self-government and independence. But what then of us in Southern Rhodesia? We would find ourselves facing a monstrous white Government, ugly, dangerous and ready to team up with South Africa in a desperate effort to maintain white supremacy. Our struggle would be infinitely harder and more costly. On the other hand, if our country remained hitched to the north we had the real possibility of inheriting a large country, which we could run together as one people, forgetting the boundaries created by Cecil Rhodes and Harry Johnston.

Mr Nkomo countered my view in this way. He was aware of the dangers I had pointed out. But he was also aware of the intransigence of the white settlers. They were now scrambling for dominion status of the Federation, and if they got it, the results for all of us would be those I feared would happen in the south. It would be better to help our brothers in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland to break up this state. They, in turn, would assist us to achieve our freedom once they had obtained theirs.

How did he know that they would feel so inclined? Did he trust all of them to go this far? I asked. He was convinced that it would be logical and natural for them to make this gesture, just as he and many other Zimbabwe Africans were behind them in their struggle. I said that I shared his hopes. But, I went on, practical politics were not as simple and straightforward as that. People might set out inspired with noble intentions, but once they had the responsibilities of power, they might well find that they could not afford to be as generous as Mr Nkomo liked to believe, even if they really wanted to be so. He thought that I was sadly lacking in confidence in black people.

Thus our conversation came to an end, as friendly as usual.

Towards the end of my second year at Rhodesia House I noticed that the Conservative Party was not so keen on inviting me to address its constituencies. Eventually these requests ceased altogether. I could only conclude that the main reason for this frosty relationship, which had begun so cordially, was my growing criticism of the Federation. But I could not do otherwise. Back home, Sir Roy was not only making growing demands for dominion status, but also mounting menacing attacks on constitutional reforms in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Then he got himself entangled with the politics of the Congo and the United Nations, siding with Tshombe and his secessionist movement in the Katanga Province of this strife-torn country. He moved Federal troops to the Congo border, while making all kinds of statements against black leaders, which clearly projected him as one of the biggest champions of white imperialism in Africa.

In short, the more Sir Roy Welensky moved in this direction, the more I lost my idealism on the question of multi-racialism. I saw no need whatsoever for dominion status before we had

laid firm foundations for a genuine non-racial society. I began to feel disgusted at being a cog in a viciously complicated mammoth wheel of racial politics. Within the Federation, people like Jasper Savanhu and other black Federal M.P.s were struggling to achieve simple improvements, but getting nowhere at all, appearing in the process more and more ridiculous in the eyes of their own people. At the same time the Whitehead Government became more and more repressive in Southern Rhodesia.

I recalled again and again that conversation I had had with Joshua Nkomo in London, and realized how right he had been.

I might have continued a civil servant just the same. But, some people will remember, Sir Roy vehemently rejected the recommendations of the Monckton Commission, made known in 1960. He threatened a rebellion. To me these proposals, although they did not meet the general aspirations of the Africans completely, were absolutely necessary and could save the Federation. The Monckton commissioners advised drastic constitutional and franchise reforms in the Federation, together with the right of secession by constituent territories, if any one of them so wished.

It was the rejection of these recommendations which, more than anything else, forced me to the conclusion that I was working for the wrong masters. Thus, after my three-year contract was completed, I quit.

It would be easy, but hardly too simple, to blame the break-up of the Federation entirely on Sir Roy Welensky. For he had other people around him, Rhodesians, British and South Africans, some of whom were bogus supporters of partnership.

The following story I heard in Salisbury illustrates the point I have been making. A Federal civil servant, born and bred in Southern Rhodesia, was for a time posted in a black African country. There he got used to meeting black people socially. When he returned home to Salisbury, he saw no reason why he should not continue in this way, and meet his fellow black Rhodesians in their homes in Harare and Highfield. But word soon went around about his shocking behaviour. Some of the people at the top were so scandalized that they decided to give him a dressing-down. They told him that, although they themselves met and drank with Africans at official functions, this was purely in pursuit of their duties, they would never dream of

doing so in their private capacity. The offender was not only told to halt his escapades into the black ghetto of Harare, but also was transferred to another Ministry where he would have no excuse to practise partnership along the lines he had discovered in that foreign black state.

Men who put this civil servant under pressure of this sort would hardly have qualified to give Sir Roy Welensky the support he needed to save the state. I do not think that they were consciously disloyal or actively wished to destroy the Federation. They had too much to lose to do any such thing. But, like all settlers, they possessed that one-track mind which failed to function logically the moment it had to deal with African feelings and human dignity.

I did not fly back to Salisbury. I chose the more leisurely journey by the *Kenya Castle*, which I boarded at Genoa and was filled with British people returning to jobs or relatives in East Africa, as well as with Rhodesians and South Africans, who had been on holiday and business in Europe. All the way down to Mombasa, the voyage was pleasant enough, if now and again marred by one or other of the small group of South Africans, who made it plain that they were not particularly happy about the presence of the tiny number of black people on the boat. However, their attitude was more than counter-balanced by that of the British folk, and a single American, who behaved quite differently. This American, a school teacher, was using his three months' leave to tour Africa in order to learn first hand about its geography and its tangled problems. The travellers from the Federation came somewhere between the British and South African attitudes, but with unmistakable leanings towards the latter on basic questions of colour and African politics.

I deliberately elected to travel by sea for I wished to give myself plenty of time to decide what role I was going to play in the affairs of my country. But at Mombasa the atmosphere, for me, became nightmarish. There scores of settlers from various parts of Kenya boarded the boat for South Africa because the 'mad' British Government was going to hand over the country to black 'savages'. I am quoting some of the strong words actually used by them. They had given up their farms and various other properties and to them it was not a matter of the slightest doubt that chaos and bloodshed of unheard-of proportions were going to break out as soon as Jomo Kenyatta and his 'kaffirs' took over the government. The very anticipation of these disasters seemed to give them special pleasure, a form of compensation for their lost homesteads.

What made matters worse for me was that, after Mombasa,

I was the only black person on the ship and whenever I came close to them, above or below the decks, they betrayed their hatred of black men. Again and again I heard: 'Dr Verwoerd has the right ideas about these people, we support him one hundred per cent.' I nearly screamed at these bellowing creatures, whose stake in Africa I had been indirectly supporting during my three years' service at Rhodesia House. But somehow I managed to contain myself. However, it turned out that I was not alone in this revulsion. For, somewhere between Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam, an Englishman bound for a job in Tanganyika came to me saying that he was nearly going mad because of the racialism that had taken over the boat. 'I have never in my whole life come across anything like it,' he said.

After a few days, however, we docked at Beira. It was an enormous relief to get out of that snake-pit of hatred. I did not reflect that I was heading for an area, my homeland, where some of those passions in the *Kenya Castle* were probably still the very staff of life.

It was midnight on Friday 10 August 1962, when I arrived at the Jameson Hotel in Salisbury. The next Monday morning I was engaged by the Anglo-American Corporation of Central Africa Limited as a Public Relations Officer.

For the past three years I had lived in Britain, where it seemed that a reasonable degree of common sense prevailed, in that it was felt that men's brains and brawn should be turned to the best advantage. An optimistic part of myself somehow expected to see something of the same pattern in my country. In other words, even though I had given up my diplomatic career in despair, I had been giving my country the benefit of the doubt.

It did not take me long to realize that things had changed to a terrifying degree. Salisbury, Harare, Highfield and Mabvuku were no longer the homes of a 'spiritually developed' people, as Jim Bailey had observed years before. Although certain hotels were open to Africans, the Ambassador having an exclusive club for black and white elites, and although the liquor laws were relaxed, underneath it all there was greater ugliness than that I had encountered briefly on the boat from Mombasa to Beira.

The settlers were now so spiritually bankrupt that their

Government and their police were using dogs and guns on defenceless black men, women and children, just as hunters through the ages had done on wild animals. The security forces patrolled, especially at night, every section of Harare, the epicentre of this potential human volcano. One night Leopold Takawira, myself and friends were leaving John Madzima's house where we were having a party, to find dozens of white officers lurking in the dark. We were stopped and searched. We raised a blazing row, but the police answered that they were not interested in politics. Although the Whitehead Administration was conducting what was called the 'Build A Nation Campaign', it was fighting a desperate battle not only against the now cock-sure Rhodesian Front, but more important still against the blacks, the real cause of the combined wrath and fear of white Rhodesia. A white professional colleague of mine who set out during this period to assess the views of his friends in the army and the police, learned in the course of his survey that they were fed up with Whitehead for restricting their powers against black nationalists and that to a man they would vote Rhodesian Front in the forthcoming elections. I was asked to identify myself with the 'Build A Nation Campaign' and stand for election under the ticket of the governing party. I promptly declined, for I felt that it would be both useless and immoral to try to salvage what was, for lack of a better term, a sinking rotting ship.

Divisions were now clearly etched between Africans, which made it impossible and dangerous to communicate with certain people. A small minority of the so-called moderate men kept up the pretence that multi-racialism would emerge triumphant. My impression was that these Africans were either completely ignorant or were merely out for the fairly substantial salaries they would receive if elected as M.P.s. But they were despised and loathed by the majority, and some of them were so afraid for their own safety in what were once peaceful African townships that they had to employ local boxers as personal bodyguards. Some of my friends bore scars from the attacks they had suffered at the hands of black youths who regarded them as *imbwira dze vasungate*—'running dogs of the imperialists'. Others were so frustrated politically, socially and economically that I could not make any sense out of their ideas at all, let alone their behaviour. Everybody, even the informer, was com-

mitted to some kind of a cause, noble or ignoble, but all demonstrated the cancer in the system of the country.

The majority of my people, however, knew exactly what they wanted. It was not partnership. It was not the 'Build A Nation' promise either. They were sick of empty, treacherous promises and now wanted a cast-iron, undiluted constitutional formula: one man one vote. And in order to achieve this goal, they had created a formidable nationalist party machine with all the trappings of a government-to-be and a vast system of cells, offices and representatives in African and European capitals.

To sketch out in detail the tortuous history and growth of the African nationalist movement to the point at which I found it in August 1962 would need a whole lengthy book. Here there is room only for a summary.

The I.C.U. of the early 1930s introduced the movement for African unity, but this was directed mainly at those in white employment. The first and most important step in the rise of African nationalism, therefore, was the formation of the Bantu Congress in 1934. The initiative came from the Shona people, of whom Mr Aaron Jacha and the Rev. T. D. Samkange were in the forefront. It did not make spectacular progress. In fact, throughout the rest of the thirties and forties it was an insignificant body, hampered partly by the Christian approach and partly by the cavilling tendencies of those controlling it. All the same, its message went deep into the consciousness of the masses of black people all over Zimbabwe.

When I came to live in Salisbury in 1946, the strongest and most militant organization was the Reformed I.C.U., led by Charles Mzingeli, while in Bulawayo Savanhu and Benjamin Burombo were at the centre of things, Savanhu in command of the Federation of the Bulawayo African Trade Unions and, Burombo of the British African Workers' Voice Association. However, although all these bodies and personalities preached unity, they did not work together. In the various attempts that were made to eliminate these divisions, these people very often came to a deadlock only because they disagreed on what name they should give the body they had in mind. I remember that Mzingeli took a strong exception to the title 'Congress' because

of what he alleged to be the compromising positions taken by men like the Rev. Samkange.

However, about 1952 concern for the future of the black people in the country was so strong among all these personalities that they created what was called the All-African Convention, with Charles Mzingeli as the provisional president, George Nyandoro, provisional secretary and Joshua Nkomo, Grey Bango, Knight Maripe and Benjamin Burombo as committee members. This action put an end to the old Bantu Congress. But the All-African Convention was short-lived. Some leaders blamed Mzingeli, saying that he was uncompromising and difficult to work with.

As I have said, the end of the war brought with it new conditions which had the effect of changing the quality of African national consciousness, particularly in the towns. Freer, better educated, angrier black people came to make their living there. It was these men and women who were to sweep away the cobwebs of old-style leadership and dispense with the multiplicity of organizations. The most significant individuals in this group were George Nyandoro and James Robert Dambaza Chikerema.

George Nyandoro was born on 8 October 1926, at Nyamweda in the Hartley District, where his mother came from, but the family's home was in the Nyandoro Reserve, Marandellas. His father was the brother of the then Chief Nyandoro. George's grandfather was the renowned Kunzwi-Nyandoro, unquestionably the fiercest and the most determined leader of the 1896 Rebellion in Mashonaland. Fighting injustice was therefore a family tradition, instilled into him from an early age. 'I was told as much as possible about the history of the settlers in our country and the part played by my grandfather in resisting white rule,' said George, when I interviewed him. His own father was arrested and fined on two occasions: once when working in Salisbury as a messenger for the chairman of the B.S.A. Company in 1918—his offence was 'walking on a street pavement'; and again when the Bishop complained that Nyandoro was trespassing in the Anglican Cathedral in Salisbury, where he had gone to pray.

George's education began at a small kraal school called Gobvu in the Chivero area, where the Shona prophet Chamunuka is reputed to have been born and lived until he was put to

death by Lobengula.* Later, he went to the St Mary's Mission, an Anglican school in the Seke Reserve, about twelve miles from Salisbury. He completed his primary school education at the end of 1944, and would have liked to go to South Africa for further learning, but he did not have adequate means. In 1945 he went to teach at the Chirawu School in the Zwimba Reserve, and then to another kraal school. But teaching was unattractive to him. Thus after only two years, he decided, like thousands of other young educated Shona, to earn his livelihood in Salisbury. Arriving there in 1947, he found a job at the *Rhodesia Herald*. But he did not stay there long, for a place taking only white journalists and printers did not offer much future. Then he worked as a social welfare officer at Que Que, organizing sports and other activities among the black people of this hot and somewhat dreary mining town.

Back in Salisbury in 1949, George Nyandoro found a better-paid job, as a clerk for African Stores, a chain of shops established by the Farmers' Co-op. Here he acquired good experience in accountancy and business management. His next employers, in 1955, were the C. T. Stores in First Street, where he was made an Assistant Accountant, for him a real breakthrough, for generally such openings were reserved for white people only. But, wishing to be his own master, he left in 1956 and started his own business, African Secretarial Services, with offices in the centre of the town. His intention was to help black business people in their townships, the majority of whom just did not keep any books and were running into all sorts of problems. He got around the strictures of the Land Apportionment Act by offering majority shares to a non-African partner. But the Rhodesian Police got to know of this through the Native Administration Department, the chief enforcer of segregation. They arrested Nyandoro, bringing fifteen witnesses against him, only to find out that he had a minority share and under the existing law this was not illegal. They had to withdraw the charge. But the Act was soon to be amended to close this loophole.

Throughout this period George Nyandoro began to emerge as a militant leader. Short and spare in physique, as he then was, he attended every meeting in Harare and I remember him rising to his feet, ignoring any chairman and making his points

* See *An Ill-Fated People* by Lawrence Vambe (page 68).

with vehemence. He professed to have been greatly impressed by the African Railway strike of 1945, which was orderly. He felt that this was the sort of spirit that should prevail all over black Rhodesia.

As soon as he arrived in Salisbury, he was drawn to Charles Mzingeli. In 1949 he became a member of the R.I.C.U. and also joined the British African Workers' Voice Association, becoming its secretary in 1950. In 1951 he was elected treasurer of the R.I.C.U. 'But only in name,' comments Nyandoro. His aim was to persuade Mzingeli and Burombo to merge their organizations and set in motion a chain reaction which would culminate in a united political and trade union body giving the black people of Zimbabwe an unanimous voice. In the event he and Mzingeli were unable to agree, but it was in the context of his endeavour to bring about a common front that Nyandoro agreed to be elected provisional secretary of the All-African Convention in 1952. Alas, the time was to come when he felt that Mzingeli was an incorrigible obstacle to unity and that he must break with the lion-hearted patriot, who had suffered so much for his people. This happened when George had collected around him a sufficient number sharing his own vision and temperament. The most significant of these was James Robert Dambaza Chikerema.

Robert Chikerema is the oldest child and son of Joseph Dambaza, who was picked by Father Richartz and sent, together with Father Jean-Baptiste Loubière, to establish the Kutama Mission in the Zwimba Reserve just as the First World War was beginning. It was at Kutama that Robert was born and brought up. To this extent his entire background was Christian and governed by the severe standards of the ascetic French priest. His father always insisted that he must grow up in perfect obedience to parental authority, which was the very essence of good breeding. He also believed that his children must learn to suffer and to stand up for what was right and just and for their Christian faith. He was not squeamish about using the cane and young Robert received more than his fair share of corporal punishment from his father.

Those who know him will admit that there is a steely streak in Robert Chikerema's character which comes out instantly where his political principles are being assailed. After schooling at Kutama, he went to St Francis College, Mariannhill, Natal,

and thence to Cape Town, where several black Rhodesians had gone before him in search of better economic opportunities and greater freedom. For the Cape was then the one area in British Southern Africa where the concept of freedom for all men, black and white, was still upheld both in theory and to a great extent in practice. There was considerable racial tolerance and segregation was at a minimum.

Young and ambitious, Robert found Cape Town an ideal place to live in, and once settled, he was irresistibly drawn to the Communist Party. This was a rejection of his parental and Christian upbringing at Kutama. But this proved a short-lived freedom. The Nationalists gained power in 1948 and lost no time in seeing to it that no part of 'their' fatherland continued to practise the dangerous philosophy of liberalism.

The new masters of the Dominion of South Africa started to legislate for stronger racial segregation, and against the Communist Party. The police took note of Chikerema's activities, and when the Nationalist Government witchhunt began in real earnest, Robert received information from friendly sources in the police that he was on the list of those members of the Communist Party about to be arrested. He had no choice but to return home.

For a brief period he was employed as a clerk at the paper and pulp factory in Norton, not far from Salisbury. But, like Nyandoro, he was not content with a sterile occupation in the service of a people who barely recognized his existence. In Cape Town he had come into contact with some of the most eminent non-white intellectuals in South Africa, men and women with experience in resisting oppression. Now he was to begin to use this knowledge among his own people who were sorely in need of sophisticated leaders.

The year 1956 must go down in the history of Zimbabwe as one of crucial importance. For it was in 1956 that Robert Chikerema got together with George Nyandoro, Parirewha, Gonese, Hamadziripi, Edison Sithole, Herbert Munangatire and the late Dunduza Chisiza (who was to be one of the first ministers in the Malawi Government). They formed what was termed, innocently enough, the Harare Youth Club. Soon, when the moment was right, Robert suggested that it be called the City Youth League. He had worked with the Youth League formed in 1948 by the angry young members of the African

National Congress of South Africa and knew what such a body could do to bolster political feeling. He was unanimously elected President, while Nyandoro and Parirewha were voted Vice-President and Treasurer respectively.

They acted like a gale-force wind in the township. Their first test of strength against the black establishment was when, in the same year, these young men and their supporters flooded a meeting called by the Reformed I.C.U. in the Mayi Musodzi (previously the Recreation) Hall. To the utter astonishment of everyone, they denounced Charles Mzingeli, thus dealing a blow to 'the Prime Minister of Harare' from which he was never to recover. The effect on Mzingeli was to make him turn more and more to the 'respectable' politics of the United Federal Party. Moving on swiftly, they next turned their attention to the white centres of power and organized the well-known 1956 boycott of the transport system run by the Salisbury Omnibus Company. It was a telling strike, and forced this corporation not to increase its fares on the African routes in the city.

In the meantime, these militants decided to revive the by now defunct Bantu Congress. The question was: Who was to be its president? Most Leaguers said it should be Robert Chikerema. But Chikerema himself and Nyandoro, being older and wiser, did not feel that this was tactically advisable. In their view the president should be someone outside their circle, a person with stature, of good education and, of course, flexibility of mind. Certain names were submitted: Stanlake Samkange, Enoch Dumbutshena and Herbert Chitepo.*

Stanlake was a university graduate, had a thorough grasp of the situation and was quite one of the most cultured Africans in Salisbury. Enoch, the eldest son of Job Dumbutshena of the I.C.U., was also a university man, intellectual and easy to work with. Herbert Chitepo had not been long in the country, having returned from a spell in England, from which he came back the first African barrister in Southern Rhodesia. He was sharper and more cutting in his opinions than Stanlake and Enoch. At this stage, he had every reason to be upset, for the Government raised strong objections to his establishing chambers in white Salisbury and only relented as a result of the

* Herbert Chipeto was assassinated (by a bomb) in Lusaka in 1975.

pressure put upon it by Herbert's white friends in the same profession.

All three turned the invitation down.

Now Chikerema and Nyandoro realized that if all the positions of the new Congress were held by the Shona, the Ndebele would draw further inwards and that would defeat the very object of the organization, which was intended to struggle for the freedom of all the people of Zimbabwe.

It was at this juncture that they looked to Joshua Nkomo and, fortunately, he agreed to serve. It was a wise decision, for, immediately, the emotions and loyalties of all progressive people in Matabeleland were diverted to this new body, the African National Congress, which was launched, amid a blaze of publicity, in 1957, appropriately on Occupation Day, 12th September, the occasion when we were put in chains in 1890.

The political slate of Joshua Nkomo, one-time social welfare officer and secretary of the African Railway Workers' Union, was a clean one. He had refused to support Huggins in his Federation campaign. He and Savanhu had been specially singled out by the Prime Minister and taken to London to represent the two tribes in the early fifties when preliminary negotiations started, but while he was in London Joshua changed his mind and defected. This action enhanced his stature enormously in the eyes of the African people.

The Government, of course, which had thought they were doing him a favour for which he should be grateful, now marked him down as a dangerous native. He was termed a womanizer, a lecherer and an unscrupulous misuser of party funds. He was said to despise the Shona (he is part-Ndebele), merely using them to gain personal power.

But his supporters closed their ears to these unsavoury accounts. To them he was a genial, lovable and accomplished politician. And, strange as it may seem, his charismatic appeal proved to be greater in the urban areas of Mashonaland than in his own part of the country. Without any doubt this was largely the result of the efforts of the Youth Leaguers, particularly Robert and George, who mounted a clever image-building exercise for him. It was an astonishing achievement.

Once the African Congress was created, things began to move with an effect that even the most indifferent settlers could not fail to notice. The original founders of the City

Youth League were joined by thousands of others, many of them having only just left school. Inevitably, the majority were drawn from the Salisbury area, particularly from Harare and Highfield. Copying the tactics of the I.C.U. in the early 1930s, they hired vans and loud-speakers and drove through all the black townships blaring announcements of their meetings to which all true patriots must come. They acquired Land-Rovers in which they dashed to all parts of the country, talking to chiefs, holding assemblies and denouncing the white Government. These bold techniques had a crucial psychological effect: that of removing from the minds of the common folk the paralysing fear of white authority. This was probably the greatest achievement of Robert Chikerema and George Nyandoro at this stage. It was almost like removing the fear of death in a people.

Thus the bus boycott strike in 1956 was accompanied by a wave of destruction to property, particularly the buses themselves. The non-African shops at the east end of Harare near the *MaJubeki* lines were also looted. This violence forced the Prime Minister, Mr Todd, to come to the township to see for himself, and during his tour of inspection, I overheard a younger politician say, 'Perhaps now he will stop thinking we are a satisfied people.'

How much Mr Todd's subsequent downfall was directly connected with this development in black politics it is difficult to say. But it was plain that, as the voice of Congress became louder, the instinctive reaction of white society was to search for a Government which had the 'guts' to keep the 'munt' in his place and stop him 'misbehaving'. This responsibility became the special concern of Sir Edgar Whitehead when he replaced Mr Todd in 1957.

'We are going to take positive action.' Robert, George and their colleagues uttered this phrase again and again for all to hear. Naturally, people anxiously wanted an explanation of this statement, but they would not go any further than repeating it as a slogan. Informers, now increasing in numbers, and security men, now working full time in an effort to keep pace with these revolutionaries, took a particular note of the phrase; we can safely conclude that when the Government was informed of the frequently recurring words 'positive action', had a sinister ring.

This was deliberate psychological warfare, designed to inspire

panic among those in power. At this stage the forces of African nationalism throughout the three territories of the Federation were working hand in hand, their overall objective being to bring about an open confrontation with all the white Governments. Big Brother, the Federal Government, would have been most anxious to see destroyed the monsters of black radicalism represented by Dr Banda, who swooped down on Central Africa in 1958 to lead the people of Nyasaland, by Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia and Nkomo of Southern Rhodesia. All three of these leaders were hell-bent on dismantling the Federation, whose existence was attracting millions of pounds and thousands of white immigrants, transforming Southern Rhodesia into one of the richest and fastest developing countries in Africa. The multi-million hydro-electric scheme at the Kariba gorge was well under way and other big industrial projects were initiated here and everywhere. The efforts of mad men like these to break up this white creation must be dealt with as severely as possible. So reasoned those in power.

To the vast majority of the black people, previously, Sir Edgar Whitehead, bachelor, was just another white man, probably a *chitsiru*, a foolish farmer, because he looked somewhat absent-minded.

But his name assumed immediate significance when he was recalled from Washington to step into the shoes of *muda vanhu*, Mr Todd, 'the lover of the African people', as some of my fellow men respectfully called him. The leaders of the African National Congress attacked him relentlessly, while the Federal Government and his own white electorate put pressure on him, so that he had no choice but to decide sooner or later to take the maddened bull of black nationalism by the horns.

He made his move in 1959. I was having breakfast in my house in Highfield one morning in February and listening to the news when I heard the announcement that the Government had banned the African National Congress of Southern Rhodesia and that all its officers had been rounded up and detained. Nothing like this had happened before in my experience. Why was it found necessary to answer the plea for justice from my people by these methods? What crimes had these men committed that warranted such drastic action? And why were they not asked to open a dialogue with the Government, or at least warned?

As far as the Government was concerned this was the only course open to it. Over five hundred people, many of them my personal friends, were drawn into the police net. Robert Chikerema and George Nyandoro, whom the Government noted as the evil geniuses of this menacing movement, were to spend four years in detention and surprisingly, to be released by the first Prime Minister of the Rhodesian Front, Mr Winston Field. The Rhodesian Government was richer by at least £15,000 from the property of Congress it looted and confiscated.

Earlier in the campaign for Federation, Godfrey Huggins, now Lord Malvern, had made the statement that while Africans should be allowed to express dissent, they must be stopped immediately if they went too far. The action taken by Whitehead and also by the Protectorate Governments in the North against the Congress movements would appear to have been in keeping with this precept. In fact Whitehead and his cabinet hoped for a time that they had completely removed the cancer of black nationalism from the country and could look forward to a prolonged period of power, during which they would enjoy the popular support of the white electorate and moderate Africans, who, they felt, were the vast majority. In this mood, a message went out from the Government reassuring black people in the townships and native reserves that they could now live in peace and go about their normal pursuits without fear of intimidation. Indeed, some Africans, who did not approve of some of the threats from Congress enthusiasts, were relieved, if only because they could now speak and move about more freely.

As for myself, these events stirred up two kinds of reactions. On the one hand I felt that the Whitehead Government should not be forgiven for its misdeeds and that, as it was a signatory to the Federal contract, I should cease to support the Federation's policy of partnership. Most of my friends, and indeed relations, had been arrested, leaving a conspicuous vacuum in my life. Robert Chikerema, George Nyandoro, Paul Mushonga, Moses Ayema and several others were my most intimate associates, and I knew them to be not only sincere in their struggle for a just society, but also innocent of any kind of violence against anybody. When they met white people as individuals at my house or anywhere else, they showed them

nothing but friendship. It seemed the Rhodesian Government had committed the biggest blunder in the recent history of the country.

On the other hand, I thought that this negative recourse by the people in power might just conceivably be the prelude to a positive new phase, leading to a greater share of power and justice for my people. I also speculated that if the Rhodesian Government could behave in this fashion while it was a part of the Federation, how much more abominable it might be if it were outside it. The fear of South Africa loomed terrifyingly in my mind, confirming my conviction that the white community in my country should be kept within the ideological mould of Central Africa.

As I left the country in June 1959, I did not witness first hand the events of the next three years in Rhodesia which proved that in black nationalism the settlers were facing a force that could not be snuffed out once and for all by ministerial proclamations and detentions, let alone machine-guns.

What happened after the banning of Congress is a common enough story. The African population was aroused into a political consciousness that had not been seen before. The five hundred 'agitators' put away by the Government were replaced by others, some of whom had previously been considered the mildest of Africans. Robert Mugabe, another Kutama Mission boy, who had been teaching in Ghana, arrived for the next tussle with white Rhodesia. Joining him were Michael Mawema, a mild-looking man, but a highly committed one, Leopold Takawira, irrepressible and idealistic, who had been working with Colonel David Stirling and the Capricorn Africa Society in its campaign for a multi-racial society in east and central Africa, Reuben Jamela, a powerful figure, heading the African Trades Union Congress, Herbert Chitepo, the barrister, Dr Parirenyatwa, the schoolmaster Josiah Chinamano, together with his fiery wife Ruth, and various others. These people met on New Year's Day, 1960, and decided to form the National Democratic Party to take the place of the banned Congress. In the absence of Joshua Nkomo, who was overseas and therefore escaped the arrests at the beginning of 1959, Mawema was elected Acting President and a leader of real quality he proved to be: he not only converted more people, black and white, to the cause, but also led a group to London and usefully countered

the move by Sir Edgar Whitehead to acquire greater independence from the British Government.

The N.D.P. took up the task where Congress had left off. It displayed the same, if not more, militancy than the latter, and because of the greatly improved quality of the men drawn to it, seemed to send a chill of greater apprehension down the spine of the administration and the white settlers. From the African point of view, however, it lost touch with the rural population, who had been the grass-roots of the Congress movement. The Rhodesian Government replied to the N.D.P. by enacting the Unlawful Organizations Act, in terms of which, contrary to the British judicial tradition, a person was presumed guilty until proved innocent. This was followed on 19 July 1960 by the arrest of Mawema, Leopold Takawira and Sketchley, the brother of Stanlake Samkange. They were charged with belonging to the banned Congress, although, fortunately, they were subsequently acquitted.

Meanwhile, two men from Matabeleland, George Silundika and Enos Nkala, took control of things and tried in vain to reason with the Government on behalf of their arrested colleagues. But the Government sent troops to deal with protesting crowds of Africans from Harare and Highfield. The Africans were provoked and broke into violence, smashing police Land-Rovers and other symbols of white power. The troops let loose a hail of bullets, only inciting their victims into greater fury. Any white motorist who drove through Harare or anywhere near it was greeted with stones and other missiles. It was evident now that my people were facing a cowardly yet ruthless security force, ignorant and contemptuous of the Africans. Where the Africans were trying to talk, these forces of 'law and order' threw tear gas, fired bullets and sent dogs among them. In this way, they created the impression that the blacks were behaving like the savages they were and that their violence was perfectly justified. White Rhodesia could therefore salve its 'Christian' conscience.

Violence soon spread to other places. Eleven Africans were killed in Bulawayo by the police. Now the war was on in earnest, a war in which the Africans, men, women and children, particularly from the schools in the Salisbury area, were prepared to give as good as they got, wreaking vengeance on any white person, guilty or innocent.

Meanwhile Whitehead negotiated a new Constitution with the British Government. Duncan Sandys, then in charge of the Commonwealth Office, asked for a full representative conference to work this out. Appropriately enough, the N.D.P. was represented by Nkomo, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole and Herbert Chitepo. This took place in Salisbury early in 1961. Nkomo agreed to discuss the proposals, but made it clear that the African attitude depended entirely on the franchise accompanying this constitution. I understood from Nkomo that both Sir Edgar and Sandys said that this section of the proposals would come later, the important thing was to reach broad agreement on the new status that Whitehead was negotiating for. Nkomo, though highly suspicious, agreed to attend the conference to its very end. As far as the Whitehead Government was concerned, this gesture on the part of Nkomo committed him to the spirit and the letter of the 1961 Constitution. Hence their fury when soon after this conference, Nkomo made it plain that he was not a party to its contract. He is dishonourable went out the cry from white Rhodesia, and indeed from Whitehall. But Nkomo was no fool. However keen he might be to protect his position, he could not forget the false promises made in the past by white Rhodesia. Nor could he brush aside the opinion of his executive, whose members he knew could throw him out of office. In fact, he was on the point of being dethroned when he made the categorical denial that he had supported the Sandys-Whitehead proposals.

Anyway, the answer to the challenge posed by the N.D.P. was given by Whitehead when he banned it at the beginning of December, 1962. I was now back in Salisbury.

What Sir Edgar Whitehead should have done to escape his own doom and that of white Southern Rhodesia was to repeal the Land Apportionment Act and liberalize the voting system immediately he had got the blessing of the British Government on the 1961 Constitution. Had he done so, a great many Africans, including the nationalists, would have taken it as a sign of good faith. Thousands of Africans would probably have acquired the vote, thus redressing the unhealthy balance between the white electorate and the few of us on the existing roll. Given these reforms, Sir Edgar could have proceeded to form

a party representing all the people of Rhodesia, leading to the prospect of multi-racial government, thus removing all the fears of any racist, extreme right-wing political party gaining power in the land. Then we could together have safely considered the question of independence, either on the basis of one man one vote, as demanded by the nationalists, or under conditions by which universal adult franchise could be achieved in the near future.

Unfortunately, or fortunately perhaps, the thinking of the settlers had not altered fundamentally since Cecil Rhodes. Whitehead insisted that he must keep faith with the Europeans and get their mandate first, before proceeding with the repeal of the Land Apportionment Act. Only then would he open the doors of political, economic and social advancement to the African people. In other words, he was insisting on making the future of my people solely dependent on the whims and power of this inward-looking, fear-ridden white society.

Confronted by this sort of idiocy, the black people of Zimbabwe had no choice but to turn to their movement and their leaders for hope of liberation. Only a minority was prepared to believe in the naïvely optimistic utterances of the white Prime Minister. These were the men who put their names forward as candidates under the territorial United Federal Party, but at the same time were so afraid for their personal safety that they surrounded themselves with thugs from Harare.

Once I was in Salisbury I could sense victory for the Rhodesian Front and panic in the governing party. The white nationalists were unequivocal, saying bluntly thus far and no further to black nationalism, while Whitehead supporters were attacking African leaders and begging us to follow them at the same time. The Rhodesian Front knew exactly what they wanted, unquestioned white supremacy. For the majority of white farmers, artisans, civil servants, soldiers and shopkeepers, the 'Build A Nation Campaign' by Whitehead was another name for black domination, and they wanted no part of it. Thus, as reports from all parts of the country predicted a sure victory for the Rhodesian Front, the Prime Minister and his Government convinced themselves that the only way to regain the support of white public opinion was to deal with the National Democratic Party. So he banned it only a few days before the fateful election day, 14th December 1962. But he

acted too late to bring about the expected miracle. The Rhodesian Front came in and the policy of partnership was buried for ever.

When I remember these events between my return to Salisbury in the middle of August 1962, and the elections that swept Sir Edgar into past history, one event comes to mind. It was the shattering news that Dr Parirenyatwa had been killed in a level-crossing accident. I sensed evil and darkness all round me; like most Africans in Salisbury, I could not believe that the tragic death of this popular man was an accident. At that time, this brilliant young Shona doctor had considerable charisma with his supporters. Coming back in the late 1950s from South Africa where he had gained his degree in medicine, Dr Parirenyatwa had built a flourishing practice in Harare. He quickly became a man of the people socially. Unlike others of the black elite, he valued his cultural traditions and was instrumental in the formation of an association of African herbalists to improve the position of the *nganga*. He also committed himself utterly to the nationalist movement. He outshone every other leader in the N.D.P. He was precise, he gave lucid answers to questions and when addressing a white audience, impressed them deeply. I even heard some Europeans in Salisbury say that they would willingly place their future in his hands, if he was at the head of a black government in Southern Rhodesia.

The story goes that when information came from police sources that the Government was going to clamp down on the N.D.P., Joshua Nkomo talked to Dr Parirenyatwa on the phone, saying that as President and Vice-President they must meet at once to decide how to deal with the impending situation, so that if the worst came to the worst, at least those remaining free knew what to do. This telephone call came to the doctor in his house in Harare one evening.

Nkomo had arranged a car to pick up Parirenyatwa and take him all the way to Matabeleland. Neither Nkomo nor Dr Parirenyatwa had the wisdom to ensure that this trip was made in the company of other people and another car. In the circumstances, it was only the driver and the doctor who set out for the dreary journey stretching over three hundred miles.

The Rhodesian police would, of course, have tapped all telephone calls made by nationalists and therefore knew exactly what Nkomo and Parirenyatwa were up to and what route his car was taking.

Somewhere near Bulawayo, the driver was crossing the railway line when a train ran into the vehicle and dragged it several yards, smashing it and killing the doctor outright. The driver was untouched. That is the story given out by official sources and, of course, confirmed by the driver, ironically called 'Danger', the only man with the dead doctor.

People in Salisbury absolutely refused to believe this account, especially as one rumour said his hands bore marks suggesting that he had been tied up with rope. But the man was dead. His body was taken for burial to the farm he had bought for his father. Thousands of people from all over the country came to bury him, mourning that he died just at the time he was beginning to make himself useful to his people after many years of conscientious preparation.

As I was arriving, I witnessed a sad demonstration of the lack of control sometimes to be found among my people. Lying by the side of the road was Reuben Jamela, that powerful African trade union leader who at this point was thought to be inclining towards the United Federal Party. He had made the effort, despite the hostility he knew he had incurred from the nationalists, to attend the funeral of the man we had all admired and loved. Some of the younger members of the N.D.P. took it into their heads to punish him. Thus, despite the tragic occasion, they set upon him and left him almost dead. Nothing that Mugabe and other leaders, including Nkomo, could do, would restrain them. Jamela was lucky to survive.

Joshua Nkomo who made the funeral oration was deeply angry and could scarcely contain his emotion. As we eventually dispersed, some of us had the premonition, I know, that our immediate future was to be even darker than the present.

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